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## RECOMMENDATIONS.

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*The following are recommendations of able men who have examined THE LAYMAN'S ASSISTANT.*

REV. DR. NICKELS of *Newark, N. J.*, writes :

MY DEAR BROTHER,—

I have heard read a considerable portion of your work in manuscript. I admire its simplicity of style, practical tone, Scriptural sentiment and suggestive character. The work would be useful, especially for families and private Christians, and ought to be published. Its extensive circulation can not fail to do good.

Yours truly,

C. M. NICKELS.

REV. MR. CURTIS, of *Union, Conn.*, writes :

DEAR BROTHER,—

Your book entitled THE LAYMAN'S ASSISTANT, parts of which you read to me in manuscript, fills a vacancy, in my judgment, of great practical value to the churches, in calling forth their united prayers, also their earnest and systematic efforts, for the salvation of souls, and is a guide to a higher Christian life.

Yours fraternally,

SAMUEL J. CURTIS.

I heartily concur in the views expressed by Mr. Curtis.

*South Woodstock.*

A. SOUTHWORTH.

DR. IDE, of *West Medway, Mass.*, writes :

The Rev. Charles Chamberlain has read to me a portion of a work which he contemplates publishing, entitled THE

## RECOMMENDATIONS.

LAYMAN'S ASSISTANT. The work is designed to bring into action more extensively the lay talent in the churches in favor of religion. The design of this work meets my cordial approbation. It is a fact greatly to be lamented, that much of the talent of laymen that is successfully employed in the acquisition of property, in the cause of education, in political discussions, should be buried, in respect to any direct action for the conversion of sinners and the edification and improvement of the churches. An attempt to bring this talent into general and efficient operation is worthy of all praise. A good work on this subject is greatly needed. Mr. Chamberlain's work is not yet completed, but judging of the rest by what I have heard, I am free to say that I sincerely wish it might be given to the public.

JACOB IDE.

REV. MR. KINNEY, *who was for twenty years pastor of the church in Darien, Conn., writes :*

Your work may well occupy a place beside "Practical Piety," "Young Christian," "Jay's Exercises," and other practical works. The laymen will read it and be influenced by it. It will make them better men and active and useful Christians. No man or woman can read it without receiving important suggestions of a practical nature, and without rising to a higher level of Christian activity and usefulness. That it may be the means of promoting the holiness and usefulness of many of God's dear children, and of bringing many delaying sinners to Christ their only Saviour, and of greatly augmenting the glory of God, is the fervent prayer of your brother in the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ.

EZRA D. KINNEY.

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THE

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LAYMAN'S ASSISTANT.

BY REV. C. CHAMBERLAIN,

PASTOR OF THE

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,

OF

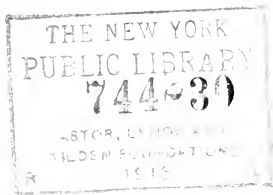
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1862.  
222



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ENTERED, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1862,

BY REV. C. CHAMBERLAIN,

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District of Connecticut.

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NOV 19 1913

## PREFACE.

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THE development of the unemployed talent of the laity has long been considered desirable. That professed Christians should meet their responsibilities, and exert their full influence, that lay effort should be general and constant, is the demand of the times. Christianity will not pervade and regenerate society until this demand shall be met. If the present work shall in any degree incite and encourage the people to exertion in the cause of Christ, one object of the writer will be attained.

Many books have been composed, designed expressly to assist clergymen. But few, if any, have been composed for the express purpose of assisting laymen in the work assigned to them. It seemed to the writer, and to a large number of brethren consulted by him, that there was a place for such a work, and a call for it. We cherish the hope, that the people will derive help and encouragement from the following pages.

Personal holiness is an essential qualification for laborers in the vineyard of the Lord. They who go to engage in efforts to save the lost, should glow with love to Christ, and with love to souls. Hence, the first part of this work is devoted to the consideration of the attainment and cultivation of personal piety.

Another reason for this part of the work, is to render the book adapted to all the members of a family, some of whom may be unconverted, and some in the early stages of religious experience.

It was thought desirable, also, to have something inserted suitable for the laboring Christian to put into the hands of unconverted persons, to awaken, or guide them to the Saviour.

As men who are engaged in secular business often have fragments of time in which they might read a few pages, though not a lengthy article, brevity has been studied with the view of making the work acceptable to them. Even in those cases which have a continuous discussion of a subject, the aim has been to make each topic so far complete in itself, that it may be read alone.

Inquiries are often made among laboring Christians for some work which would assist them in preparation for prayer and conference meetings. It is difficult to direct them to any work which had been designed to answer such a purpose, or which, to any considerable extent, did answer such a purpose. This fact has been borne in mind in the present work. It is our hope, that the suggestions made in reference to these meetings will lead many to feel the importance of laboring in them, and will induce them to make exertions to qualify themselves to do so. Besides, many topics suitable to prayer meetings have been discussed with such brevity that, if desirable, they may be read in such meetings.

As nothing sectarian has been introduced into the work, it is the hope of the author that it will be found acceptable alike to different denominations; and his earnest prayer, that it may prove a blessing to families, and be the means of stirring up the people of God to effort and prayer, and of encouraging their activity in the cause of Christ.

EASTFORD, CONN., July 19th, 1862.



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TO MY BROTHER,  
DEACON HOLBROOK CHAMBERLAIN,  
OF  
BROOKLYN, N. Y.,  
THIS WORK IS INSCRIBED,  
BY THE AUTHOR,  
AS A TOKEN OF RESPECT,  
AND  
A MEMORIAL OF FRATERNAL AFFECTION AND FRIENDSHIP.



# THE LAYMAN'S ASSISTANT.

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## PART I.

### THE ATTAINMENT AND CULTIVATION OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.

---

“WHAT IS THE ALMIGHTY, THAT WE SHOULD SERVE HIM?”

“WHO by searching can find out God? Who can find out the Almighty to perfection?” The evidence of God’s existence and perfections is inscribed upon his works, even his eternal power and Godhead. Were there no sin to cloud the mind and obstruct the operation of its faculties, God would be seen and his true character discovered in those manifestations of himself made in his works. But such is the effect of sin upon the mind, that those who get no other views of God than such as result from their own unaided investigations, adopt very inadequate conceptions of the Godhead. The tendency is to Polytheism and Pantheism. The heathen in India believe that every thing is God. Hence, they worship almost all animate and inanimate objects. Some in Christian lands adopt the same view. It is really Atheism. For we can have no idea of any thing as God, unless it be a being distinct from, and before all things, and above all things. Pantheism does not represent God as a being, but as the

sum of all being. This is no personal God, who could take knowledge of us and help us. If such were our views of God, we might well inquire, "What is the Almighty that we should serve Him? and What profit should we have if we should pray to Him?" But there must be a God who is before all things, and who is the cause of all things. No being or thing could be the beginning of itself. Therefore, we must of necessity go back to some cause which is itself uncaused.

It is sometimes inquired, How could God be without a beginning? He could not be with a beginning: because every thing which had a beginning must have had a cause, and been caused by something before itself. We must admit a first self-existent cause, or else deny all cause. The ultimum of human knowledge is the knowledge of facts. It is unphilosophical to refuse to believe that things are, because we can not tell how they are. If we proceed in this way, we must doubt our own existence. We do not get rid of the difficulty, how God could be without beginning, by adopting Pantheism. For it is as easy to see how God could be without beginning and bring nature into existence, as to see how nature could be without beginning. And the view is far more rational, for there is nothing in God which makes it necessary that he should have any cause to his existence. But there is in nature; for the most essential part of what we might call nature, in the comprehensive sense of that word, men and animals, for instance, we know had a beginning. Now, if we suppose nature to be God, we



must suppose the inferior part of nature to be the cause of the superior. This would be unphilosophical; for we can not suppose the effect superior to the cause. There is weight in Paul's reasoning upon these premises. "Forasmuch as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold and silver, graven by art and man's device."

The true God must be infinite. If we could conceive of any being greater or better than the Being whom we had been accustomed to call God, we must necessarily transfer our ideas of God to him.

The true God is a revealed God. When I come to you and say such is God, as I have discovered him by my unaided powers, and such is God, as He has revealed Himself,—there is certainly a difference in favor of the latter. There is necessarily something finite in a God discovered by the finite mind of man; and besides, the fact could be announced and required to be regarded only by finite authority. Hence, a revealed God alone will command the homage and obedience of mankind. Let the idea be once embraced that the Bible is only human in its authority, and its teachings concerning God will cease to be regarded, or to have any controlling power over the mind. Any discoveries of God, then, made by the unaided efforts of the human intellect, or without the authority of revelation to enforce them, would be of no benefit as a means of reforming and elevating mankind.

Again, in order to be of any advantage to mankind, the Being represented as God must be superior in his

attributes and character to men. Otherwise, there would be nothing in our conceptions or worship of Him to elevate and improve the character. The Pantheistic view represents all the universe as God, and man as the highest development of the universe, and therefore fails to make any representation of God, which, however much regarded, would elevate man in the scale of being. Hence, the God of the Bible, infinite in every attribute and "perfect in holiness," is alone adapted to the wants of fallen humanity.

God is the maker of all things. He is spoken of as "God that maketh the worlds." "He that built all things is God." "He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast." "Hath not my hand made all these things? saith the Lord." God is the rightful Governor of the universe. He is perfectly qualified to govern the universe. He is eternal, unchangeable, self-existent, omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient, infinite in wisdom, benevolence, justice, mercy, and truth. He is the only Being capable of governing the universe. The homage of all beings belongs rightfully to Him. His benevolence requires him to govern the universe, for his government is essential to any good, any happiness, among his creatures.

God does govern, and will judge, the universe. He has enacted laws for us to obey, appointed duties for us to perform, and He will reward or punish us, according as we love and serve, or disobey and rebel against Him.

To aid our conceptions of God, we must conceive of

Him as a person, in whom adhere all perfections, both natural and moral. Reason, affection, and will belong to man, as he came from the hands of his Maker ; and yet “in the image of God made He man.” We must study mind, if we would gain just conceptions of God, for God is a spirit.

But to aid our conceptions of God, he has been pleased to manifest himself to us in human nature. Christ is “the brightness of the Father’s glory and the express image of his person.” “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” There is no complete revelation of God, except that which was made in Jesus Christ.

To serve God is the end for which we were placed here. In serving Him, we secure our own highest happiness and usefulness in this world, and our future and eternal felicity.

“Choose ye this day whom ye will serve ; but as for me, I will serve the Lord.” There is no reason for a moment’s hesitation or indecision, in reference to this matter. If you serve God, He will make you blessed forever. If you neglect his service, you must have for your portion only that which created things can bestow.

“Sure there’s a mighty God,  
Nor is religion vain ;  
Though men of vice may boast aloud,  
And scoffers hate his name.”

## THE FRUITS OF CHRISTIANITY AND INFIDELITY COMPARED.

“By their fruits ye shall know them.” The character of every system of doctrines is fairly tested by its fruits. If Christianity produces better fruits than Infidelity, then should its doctrines be received and taught in preference to those of Infidelity. The fruits of the two systems in life are fairly presented by the following anecdote :

“A number of young men, of whom I was one, met weekly for prayer, at the room of an aged colored female disciple, in New York. These young men were not the sons of wealth. If not poor, they supplied their own resources by their daily employment. And all of them were too young to have made for themselves position or character. All of them professed to love the Bible and the place where prayer was wont to be made. Of some of them my knowledge is distinct and full. One of them rose to eminence, as an accomplished writer and editor. He became an honorable politician; and for years has served his country and the cause of Protestantism with distinction, as a minister at a foreign court. Another of them is an ex-mayor of New York, whose hand has never been withheld from any work of religion or philanthropy. Another is the honored partner of one of the largest publishing houses in the city of his residence. Another of them has held on the even tenor of his way, has risen to eminence as a merchant, has acquired a large fortune, and is a pillar in one of the most important congregations,

and one of the best known in the British Isles. Another is the head of one of the largest mercantile houses in the Union. Another is a well-known merchant of New York, who has a heart for every good work, and who has never withheld his hand from the plow. Another is a useful minister in the Western States, whose labors have been blessed in turning many to righteousness. Two others, who gave fair promise of usefulness in the more secluded walks of life, were early removed to their heavenly home. I was myself among the youngest, and, when I was first invited to join the circle, not a communicant of the church."

These statements Dr. Murray made to the Fulton-street prayer-meeting. When he sat down, a man arose in another part of the house. "I have," said he, "recently visited the prison at Sing Sing. As I went from cell to cell, I met with an old man who told me a very different story from the one just narrated. He said that when he was young he was one of a company who formed an Infidel club which met once a week for talking Infidelity, gambling, and drinking,—not far from the upper room of the other meeting just mentioned. Of those composing that meeting, one, said he, died by his own hand; another by the hand of violence; some in state prison; some of delirium tremens; and as far as I know, I am the only one of them surviving; and here am I in the garb, and daily at the work, of a felon."

To Christianity is learning indebted for its progress among men. All the evangelical Protestant sects have their prosperous literary institutions in almost

every State of the Union, but Infidelity has yet to make its first successful enterprise of this sort, and state policy and state patronage, exclusive of religious influence, can not show a single flourishing college from the Atlantic and the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico. But the free voluntary movements of different denominations of Christians have reared a hundred and twenty colleges in different parts of these United States, many of them in the very infancy of the states or provinces,—all within a little more than two hundred years after the first settlement of the country, and furnished them with a succession of learned and pious teachers.

According to the sober judgment of Infidels themselves, Christianity brings forth the best fruits.

I have heard an anecdote of two gentlemen traveling together, somewhere in Switzerland. Presently they came into the midst of forests; and you know the gloomy tales the people tell about the inns there, how dangerous it is to lodge in them! One of them (an infidel,) said to the other, (who was a Christian,) "I don't like stopping here at all. It is very dangerous indeed." "Well," said the other, "let us try." So they went into the house; but it looked so suspicious that neither of them liked it, and they thought they would prefer to be at home in England. Presently the landlord said, "Gentlemen, I always read and pray with my family before going to bed. Will you allow me to do so to-night?" "Yes," they said, "with the greatest pleasure." When they went up stairs the Infi-

del said, "I am not at all afraid, now." "Why?" said the Christian. "Because our host has prayed." "Oh!" said he, "then it seems, after all, you think something of religion! Because a man prays you can go to sleep in his house!"

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#### THE FRUITS OF INFIDELITY AND CHRISTIANITY COMPARED.

WHAT is the fruit of Infidelity in death? The hour of death is a solemn hour. It tests our principles and doctrines. It is generally an honest hour, which brings out the real feeling of the heart.

Multitudes have acknowledged in a dying hour that Infidelity has led them to a life of profligacy, vice, and crime. Multitudes have lamented the day in which an infidel book came into their hands and they came under the influence of an infidel companion. But is such the case with those who have embraced the religion of the Cross? Do they in dying accents mourn over religion as having led them to courses which brought evil upon them? Do they lament that they have had the Bible, or come under the influence of Christian companions? Many Christians have looked back from the death-bed with inexpressible gratitude that they were favored with the Bible and other religious influences, which led them to become followers of the Lamb.

How did Paine die? Under the compulsive power of conscience he declared that if the devil ever had an agent on earth, he had been one. When his infidel friends said "You have lived like a man, and we hope

you will die like one," he said to one near him, "You see what miserable comforters I have." To the woman whom he had seduced from her husband, her friends, and her religion, he said, "The principles I have taught you will not bear you out." As death approached, he began to betray those terrors which before he laughed at. He would not be left alone night or day, nor suffer his attendants to be out of his sight; and often, for a long time together, would exclaim in anguish, "O Lord, help me! O Christ, help me!"

Look now at the death of Voltaire. This prince of infidels is overwhelmed with terror. What does he think now of his infidel friends? "It is you," said he, "who have brought me to my present state. Begone! I could have done without you all." What now does he think of that Saviour he had pronounced a wretch? Alternately he blasphemes and supplicates his mercy, exclaiming, "O Christ! O Jesus Christ!" till his friends flew from his bedside, horror-struck, declaring the sight too terrible to be borne.

With these scenes contrast the following farewell message of Payson to his sister:

"Were I to adopt the figurative language of Bunyan, I might date this letter from the land of Beulah, of which I have been for some weeks a happy inhabitant. The Celestial City is full in my view. Its glories beam upon me, its breezes fan me, its sounds strike upon my ears, and its spirit is breathed into my heart. Nothing separates me from it but the River of Death, which now appears but an insignificant rill that may be crossed



at a single step whenever God shall give permission. The Sun of Righteousness has been gradually drawing nearer and nearer, appearing larger and brighter as he approached ; and now he fills the whole hemisphere, pouring forth a flood of glory, in which I seem to float like an insect in the beams of the sun, exulting, yet almost trembling, while I gaze on the excessive brightness, and wondering with unutterable wonder why God should deign to shine upon a sinful worm. A single heart and a single tongue seem altogether inadequate to my wants. I want a whole heart for every separate emotion, and a whole tongue to express that emotion.

“O! my sister, my sister! Could you but know what awaits the Christian! Could you but know only so much as I know, you could not refrain from rejoicing and even leaping for joy. You have known a little of my trials and conflicts, and know that they have been neither few nor small ; and I hope that this glorious termination of them will serve to strengthen your hope.”

---

“I THOUGHT UPON MY WAYS.”

WE can not, by an act of the will, directly awaken feeling. But we may, by an act of the will, bring before the mind objects adapted to awaken correspondent feelings. If we would feel as we ought, we must think upon objects adapted to awaken right feeling. If we think upon God, his attributes and dealings toward us, it will have a tendency to bring into exercise right feelings toward him.

Think of your ways in reference to God. He has created and preserved you. But you employ that existence which is thus the gift of God, in sinning against him. God has loaded you with his benefits. He has fed and clothed you, given you friends, and daily followed you with mercies innumerable. But what has been the result? "Hear, O heavens! and give ear, O earth! for the Lord hath spoken. I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me!"

God has sent his Son to die for you; but you have trampled under foot the most precious blood of Jesus. God has called after you by his Spirit; but you have resisted the Holy Ghost. Had you treated any earthly friend as you have treated God, you would have been forever abandoned by him. But still God calls after you, saying, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to God, for he will abundantly pardon." Think how criminal to go on adding sin to sin against such a God.

But your ways are productive of great evil in the world. By sin you pervert your existence. One sinner destroyeth much good. Think how much good you might have done by a life of faith and prayer. Instead of this, while in impenitence your influence has been to prevent others from coming to Christ, and to drag them on in the course to hell. At the judgment of the great day, you will meet souls who will

charge their destruction upon you. Thus you go on treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath.

Think of your broken resolutions. Often in your own judgment you have condemned your ways, and resolved to amend them. But though these resolutions are recorded for your condemnation, still you go on in your sins.

Think of your ways as they will terminate. Oh, what a death you must die! What a scene awaits you at the judgment! What an eternity will be your doom! Rapidly you are hastening to it. Perhaps your last sands are running, and yet you cast off fear and restrain prayer.

But the grand difficulty in the way of your salvation consists in your indisposition to give attention to the things which belong to your peace. You will not thoroughly examine your condition and prospects as a dying, accountable creature. Who could think upon his ways in the light of divine truth, and not feel that he must turn from them without delay into the testimonies of God? But you have been inclined to shut out the light from your mind. You have neglected to think of these things, so as to come to a proper conclusion. How often have you voluntarily neglected those means which lead you to a sense of your lost condition! And when thoughts of these things have sprung up in your minds, how often have you resorted to amusement, or vain company, or some other expedient, to rid yourself of them. Who that is unconverted has ever fully considered his ways? Have you

given the subject of religion a candid, full and prayerful attention, and come to the conclusion that it will do for you to go on in the ways of sin, to live and die in sin?

Are you willing to give your attention to this subject? Will you examine it thoroughly, so thoroughly that you will be willing to rest your eternal interests upon the conclusion to which you come in reference to it?

The thoughtless will never turn. It is all in vain, if you will not give your *attention* to religion, that a Saviour has died, that the Gospel is preached, that a day of grace is given. You will go on in the ways of sin, till your feet stumble upon the dark mountains. Then will you realize that you are lost, lost, forever lost! Every one that ever reaches heaven will be able to say, "I thought upon my ways, and turned my feet into thy testimonies."

But remember that thoughtlessness will not avert danger from you. It only darkens the prospect of your salvation, and forebodes your certain destruction. It is your thoughtlessness which strikes up the notes of lamentation, over you, as hopelessly lost. O that they were wise! O that they understood this! O that they would consider their latter end!

---

#### AN IMPORTANT QUESTION.

"Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth?"

An important matter is here presented for the young to decide upon. It is nothing less than whether they will submit themselves to the guidance of their Father in Heaven. This is a question, my young friend, which often comes up in your mind. Will you abandon a life of prayerlessness and folly, and commence a life of piety? Remember, before you decide upon this matter, that godliness is profitable to all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. In vain will you seek for happiness while you withhold your heart from God.

Joy is a fruit that will not grow  
On earthly soil;  
All we can boast, till Christ we know,  
Is vanity and toil.

Religion will save you from the dangers to which youth so often fall a prey. It will introduce you more fully into the society of the virtuous and the good, and surround you with their sympathies. It will give you character which will be of value to you in the affairs of this life. Not only will you find happiness and prosperity to follow in its train, but you will find it a consolation in distress.

A young lady of sixteen once left home to visit some distant friends. During her visit she was seized with fatal sickness. Though the fact of her sickness was communicated to her home, it was some days before her parents arrived. She was then conscious that she had but few hours to live. Her mother, anxious to

know her state of mind while she was yet able to converse, said to her, "My daughter, do you enjoy peace of mind in the prospect of death?" She replied, "My dear mother, I chose Christ for my friend while I was in health, and now I am not afraid to trust him on a sick and dying bed." What are all the treasures of earth, compared with the friendship of Christ? Let me entreat you, then, to frame your doings to turn unto the Lord. What I mean is illustrated by the following anecdote :

On a pleasant evening a while ago, in a certain town in New England, while two young ladies were walking together, said one to the other, "I understand there is some prospect of a revival of religion in this town, and if there is one, I hope I shall be made an early subject of it." The other replied, "Well, I hope I shall not ; for I have not enjoyed enough of the world to attend to religion yet." But mark the sequel. The first mentioned soon after attended a prayer meeting, and requested all the pious who were present to pray for her, stating that she had little or no particular impressions, but that she desired to be more deeply awakened, and to experience a change of heart. She kneeled with those who prayed for her, and after two or three weeks of anxious conviction and inquiry she was made a hopeful subject of divine grace. The other young lady, about the same period, in the midst of her vain pursuits and worldly amusements, after retiring in perfect health, awoke in the night, and requested her mother to come to her, for said she, "I am very unwell." Her

brother ran across the street for a physician, and delivered his message and returned immediately, but found her a corpse. Her soul had gone to the bar of God!

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“MY SPIRIT SHALL NOT ALWAYS STRIVE WITH MAN.”

THIS language deserves the attention of all, especially that of the young. As God has commanded and encouraged the young to seek him, so does he in a special manner visit them with the influences of his Spirit. His Spirit strives with you, young friends. He not unfrequently visits you in the hours of retirement and reflection, in times of the solemn providences of God, and when you hear the truths of the Gospel addressed to you. The Spirit strives with you. He impresses in some degree the solemn truths of religion upon your minds, and you have many serious and solemn moments. At times you feel that all is not right with you, and that you ought to do something to prepare to die and meet your God. Now it is this Spirit alone that will awaken any feelings that will lead you to seek the face of God. The sending of the Spirit is Heaven's last effort to save you. When this Spirit deserts you, you will be left without any inclination towards religion. If he finally abandons you, you will die in your sins. But the Scriptures expressly teach, that to resist this Spirit, to refuse to follow its promptings, will result in its being withdrawn from you. “Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at naught all

my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me; for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: they would none of my counsel; they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices." Every time you feel the necessity of religion, and give no attention to it, you resist the Spirit, that Spirit by which God calls you to the ways of wisdom, which He has said in his holy word, shall not always strive with man. By the time you hope to attend to religion, if you refuse when God calls, that Spirit may be forever withdrawn from you. Does it not become you, then, to make your peace with God without delay; while God calls, to hear; while his Spirit strives, to yield to its teachings? They that seek Him early shall find Him. Is not this plainly indicated by that call which He gives you in the morning of your days, by his ever blessed Spirit? Will you not, then, seek the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near? If you can resist the Spirit now while your hearts are comparatively tender, how much more as the heart becomes harder and the habits and dispositions of sin become strengthened. Now, then, while God calls you by his Spirit, submit to his government, repent of your sins, make your peace with Him, and live.



“Ah! Mr. Hervey,” said a dying man, “the day in which I ought to have worked is over, and now I see a horrible night approaching, bringing with it the blackness of darkness for ever. Woe is me! When God called, I refused. Now I am in sore anguish, and yet this is but the beginning of sorrows. I shall be destroyed with an everlasting destruction!”

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#### THE FOLLY AND DANGER OF DELAY.

“TO-DAY, after so long time, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.” The work of repentance should be performed without delay. God judges better than men. But God commandeth all men now everywhere to repent.

If you delay repentance, you will in the meantime be doing that which you intend to be sorry for, sin against a being you intend to love, and incur a loss of time and opportunity to do good which you will ever afterwards regret.

Besides, delay to-day makes probable delay to-morrow. It is seldom that those who put off till a future time the work of repentance, find themselves any more ready to perform it when that time arrives. There is generally more inclination to delay. Thus every time the work of repentance is put off, there is less prospect that it ever will be performed.

Delay is dangerous, because it hardens the heart and grieves the Holy Spirit. The heart is hardened by withstanding the truth which would lead to immediate

repentance. And the point to which the Spirit would lead you is to turn from sin to God. By delaying repentance you resist the Holy Ghost. And to resist the Holy Ghost is dangerous, for God hath said, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." It may be that now for the last time the Spirit is striving with you.

Delay is dangerous because life is uncertain. The wise man says, "Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." To put off that which is essential to salvation till to-morrow, is boasting of to-morrow. But to-morrow, reason may be overthrown, or life may have taken its flight.

A short time ago, there lived in the vicinity of Boston a young lady of amiable character, of lovely person and agreeable deportment; her mind was awakened on the subject of religion. She felt that she was a sinner; the fearful consequences of the judgment were full in her view. In this trying hour she was urged to repent now at once, without delay. She seemed to think that the terms were hard, too peremptory, although they were according to the word of God. When she retired alone, her conscience pressed her hard, and she came to the conclusion that she would certainly give her heart to Christ in four years. This at first gave her some ease of mind, but she soon reflected that she might not live so long as four years, and then if she did not repent she might be lost for ever. She was again alarmed, and resolved to repent in three years. At this resolution she was calm for a moment, but

reflecting that she might not live this period, she was again alarmed, and resolved that in one year she would certainly attend to the salvation of her soul. This was a much shorter time, and on resolving on this period, she was composed for nearly a week ; but reflecting again, she saw a whole year was considerable time, and if she should die, she would be lost for ever. So, under the pressure of an awakened conscience, she resolved most solemnly that she would on the next Thursday attend to the salvation of her soul, and give herself to Christ. This time was so short, and the resolution so solemn, that she seemed to think the work was done ; but ah ! she had still a cruel, wicked and deceitful heart. She was after this perfectly at ease ; she had made a solemn resolution, and had fixed a time when she would attend to this great concern of salvation ; here she rested. But it was a fearful and awful delusion ; she rested short of an interest in Christ, and felt secure from the ravages of time or sickness, and from the fear of offending God, or the torments of a world of woe. On Friday she was taken ill, and required medical aid, but nothing seemed to arrest the progress and violence of her fever, and she died on Wednesday ; and on the very day she had fixed to attend to the interests of her soul, her body was laid in the silent tomb. Such are the fearful consequences of delay. “Behold, now is the accepted time ; behold, now is the day of salvation.”

## THE NEGLECTED TREASURE.

A BIBLE distributor was once going through a country village in England. He came to a cottage which seemed to be in a wretched and miserable condition. The windows were broken, and stuffed with straw and old rags. The hinges of the door were broken, and every thing about it seemed to be going to destruction. As he came near to the door, he heard loud angry voices, with oaths and curses. The children had crept away, frightened, into the corner of the room, while their father and mother were quarreling. The stranger spoke to the father of the family, and said, "My friend, how unhappy you must be to live in this way. I wonder you don't try and make yourselves more comfortable." "Ah, Sir," said the man, "it's very hard for us poor people to be comfortable, when we can't get bread enough to eat."

The Bible agent then asked for a drink of water. The man very readily gave him a drink out of a broken mug. As he was drinking the water, his eye wandered round the room. In one corner of it, all covered over with dust and rubbish, he saw a large family Bible. He thanked the cottager for his drink of water, and said to him in a low tone, as he handed back the cup, "My friend, I have a secret to tell you. There is a neglected treasure in your cottage, which, if you only find and make a right use of it, will make you rich and happy. Good-by." When he was gone, the man and his wife thought a great deal about his words.

At first they were inclined to think he was only making fun of them; but still they could not forget what he had said. "A treasure that would make them rich and happy." What could it be?

Each of them thought a great deal about it, though neither of them would say any thing to the other on the subject. When the man was by himself, he would search all through the cottage, and ransack every corner, to try and find the treasure. And when she was all alone, she would do the same thing. But no treasure was found.

One day, after she had been searching until she was tired, she sat down, thinking to herself what the treasure could be. As she sat thinking thus, her eye happened to light on the Bible. She said to herself, "I wonder if that can be it." Immediately she arose, and wiping the long gathered dust from the back of it, she opened the book. It was a long day since she had done so before. It was the gift of her departed mother. And the first words which met her eye as she opened it, written with her mother's hand on the inside cover of the Bible, were these words: "The law of thy mouth, is dearer to me than thousands of gold and silver." "This must be the treasure of which the stranger spoke," she said, and then sat down to read the book. It showed her her sins. It told her of the Saviour who could take those sins away. She sought him, and became a Christian.

One day, when her husband came home, she said to him, "Husband, I have found the treasure of which

the stranger spoke." "Where is it?" said he. "In this blessed book," she replied. "Let me read to you about it." She did so. The result was, that he, too, became a Christian.

When the Bible agent came round the next year, he found the house changed, and every thing changed about it. He could hardly realize it was the same place. They gave him a cordial welcome, exclaiming, "We have found the treasure of which you told us, and it has made us rich and happy."

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#### THE DUTY OF REPENTANCE.

REPENTANCE literally signifies a change of mind. It is that great moral change which the Gospel teaches us is essential to salvation. Paul witnessed both to small and to great, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. There is no salvation in impenitence. But repentance is unto salvation. It is therefore important that all seeking salvation should understand in what true repentance consists.

1. Repentance implies conviction of sin. Conviction of sin is a sense of our true character in the sight of God. That is, a character destitute of any real goodness. Paul said, "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing." The Saviour said to the Jews, "I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you." Love to God characterizes nothing which the unconverted sinner does. His motives in whatever he does, even in praying and reading the

word of God, are all wrong. He does nothing for the glory of God. But God's requirement is, "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." The sinner's life has been one of rebellion against God. The very life which God prolongs, the very health and strength which God gives, are spent in sinning against him. The sinner has rejected the Lord Jesus Christ, who died that he might live. He is without excuse for his sins. He deserves condemnation. He might justly be sent to hell. This the penitent sinner feels to be his case. He sees himself to be such a sinner as the Bible represents him to be.

2. Repentance implies a sense of the evil of sin. The prodigal exclaimed, "How many hired servants of my father have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!" He felt that his sins had been the occasion of his misery. Had it not been for them, he had been happy. So the penitent sinner feels that his sins have been the cause of his misery. He is conscious that he has been voluntary in departing from God, and trampling under foot his laws, and that he has destroyed himself by his sins.

3. Repentance also implies confession of sin. It is connected with a broken heart and a contrite spirit. And where these exist, there is that humility which leads to confession of sin. We can not separate godly sorrow for sin from a disposition to confess it. All descriptions of true repentance and all experiences of it place them together. In genuine repentance the sin-

ner spreads out the whole catalogue of his sins before God. He would fully confess all, and rejoices that God knows his heart, and all that is passing there of sorrow for sin.

4. Repentance implies the forsaking of sin. They who hate their sins and are sorry for them, will be careful not to repeat them. If there is any sin in heart or practice, in habit or in business, that is not abandoned, there is no repentance. Sparing things he was to destroy, prevented Saul's acceptance with God. So the sparing of any sin will prevent the sinner's acceptance with God.

5. The commencement of a new life is implied in repentance. The penitent not only forsakes his sins, but commences the performance of his duty. Though he feels his weakness and dependence, nevertheless whatever sacrifice it may cost him, his purpose is henceforth to make the will of God the rule of his life. The neglect of any known duty is evidence of impenitence. No one can continue in the neglect of duty without resisting the truth and the Spirit of God. So far as we have the light, we must walk in the light, or the love of God can not be within us.

6. Repentance implies restitution so far as it is practicable. The Publican said, "If I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." It is true, the sinner can not undo all the evil he has done. This he laments. But to some extent restitution is practicable. He who has said ought to injure another, can correct it. He who has



in any way appropriated to himself what belongs to another, can restore it. And so far as it is practicable, the penitent will make restitution to such as he has wronged.

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## FRUITS OF REPENTANCE.

“Bring forth, therefore, fruits meet for repentance.” Repentance being the great change by which the sinner passes from death unto life, it is important for every one to consider what are the fruits of true repentance.

The test which John gives of true repentance, is laying aside besetting sins. “The people asked him, saying, What shall we do then? He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise. Then came also the publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, What shall we do? He said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you. And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? He saith unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages.” He charges each class to lay aside their besetting sins. Selfishness or want of charity, covetousness and extortion, oppression and discontent, were their besetting sins. If these were laid aside, it would be manifest that there had been a reform. But if the same besetting sins remain after repentance which existed before, then the current of corrupt nature has still a channel in which to run, and there is no evidence of genuine repentance.

Another fruit of repentance is a love of faithful preaching and faithful dealing on the part of Christian friends. The penitent loathes and abhors sin. He is therefore willing to have his heart searched by the truth, though it exposes a corruption here and a corruption there. When the truth exposes his delinquencies, he says, "That is my case; I must strive to lead a better life, and I will seek deliverance from these corruptions." But when the truth lays bare sins in the impenitent heart, it takes offense.

Another fruit of repentance is a disposition to abandon sinful practices, whatever may be the expense. In the Acts it is recorded that many that believed came and confessed and showed their deeds. Many of them also which used curious arts, brought their books together and burned them; and they counted the price of them, and found it was fifty thousand pieces of silver. The great object of the penitent is to be right first. They put conscience in front, and bid all the other faculties follow in its train. Their motto is, first the kingdom of God and the righteousness thereof. These sorcerers might have had practice, and might have received something for their books. But all this they were willing to sacrifice in order to be right. With the penitent, gain is of no account in comparison with righteousness.

Another fruit of repentance is a Christian temper. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, truth." True repentance restores the mind to its proper balance. Hence comes

into exercise a Christian temper. The vices of the mind are abhorred, and the graces of the Spirit are brought into exercise. To render good for evil, to exercise that charity of which the apostle speaks, is evidence of genuine repentance.

Again, if repentance is genuine, it will be lasting in its effects. Some hope they have forsaken their sins, and for a time they are engaged in the work of Christ. They promise much fruit. But they soon become indifferent and inactive. They are like the barren fig-tree, upon which the owner sought for fruit, but found none. Something attempted, something done for Christ, and perseverance in well-doing is a proper fruit of repentance.

In the winter of 1839, a powerful revival of religion pervaded one of our western cities. Among the inhabitants was a tavern-keeper who retailed spirituous liquors, whose wife was a devotedly pious lady. Not far from their residence was preaching every evening, and a meeting for prayer and religious conversation every morning. Daily the Spirit's power was manifest in setting home the truth to the hearts of sinners, so that the anxious inquiry broke forth from their lips, "What must we do to be saved?" The tavern-keeper was a constant attendant upon the evening meetings. There an arrow from the quiver of the Almighty reached his heart. One afternoon he entered the chamber where his wife was sitting alone, and said to her, "My dear wife, I feel that I am a lost sinner. Will you pray for me?" "I will try," she replied, and

kneeled down and poured out her soul to God for him. Here, however, no light broke upon his mind. But his wife followed him with her earnest prayers. The next morning, in great distress, he betook himself to the vestry, and took his seat among the anxious inquirers. Faithfully did the pastor talk with him, and many were the earnest prayers offered to God in his behalf. Still the burden tarried on his soul. Finally the pastor said to him, "If you would thoroughly repent, you must cease the sale of intoxicating drink, and make your tavern a temperance house." This he was not disposed to do. Still, morning after morning, with his mind dark and troubled, he visited the inquiry meeting. Finally the pastor said to him, "I know of nothing more that I can say to you, and it will be vain for you to continue coming to these meetings unless you cease the sale of intoxicating drink." He still held on to his business, and the next morning went to an inquiry meeting in another part of the city. Here, though his character was known, nothing was said to him in reference to his business. In general terms he was instructed in the way of salvation, and urged to give his heart to God. But he soon became convinced that it was in vain for him to seek for peace in the ways of sin. At last he said to his wife, "I shall sell no more intoxicating liquor." The business was arrested. The next morning, in the enjoyment of peace with God, he entered the inquiry meeting of his pastor, and thanked him for those faithful instructions which had resulted in his salvation. Soon a temperance sign swung in front

of the house; and within, family prayers were daily offered, which the traveler was permitted to join. The tavern-keeper was blessed in his soul, and prospered by the patronage of the moral and the pious.

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A THING NEVER TO BE REGRETTED.

“GODLY sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation not to be repented of.” They who sorrow for their sins because they are against God, exercise true repentance. This repentance is unto salvation. They who exercise it receive forgiveness through the blood of the Lamb. They are no longer under the dominion and condemnation of sin. The love of God is shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Spirit, and they find rest to their souls. This repentance is never to be sorrowed about, never to be regretted.

What is lost by repentance? Only the pleasures of sin. These are always followed by regret. There is no happiness in sinful pleasures. The end of those things is death. What is gained by repentance? Peace of mind, the friendship of God, and eternal life. Those who exercise godly sorrow for sin, then, gain infinite good, and lose nothing, only what they may pronounce vanity. They have therefore no occasion for regret.

If you exercise true repentance, your views and feelings will be changed. It will be no source of regret that you must forsake sinful pleasures, for you will have found infinitely better and more satisfying pleasures. If you were to carry the views and feelings which you

have in impenitence into a religious life, then would it be burdensome indeed; then might you regret the loss of the pleasures of the world. If we were to carry the views and feelings of childhood into mature life, then would it occasion regret to put away childish toys for the business and possessions of manhood. But when we become men we put away childish things. So, when we become Christians, we put away the pleasures of the world: we have found something better.

Repentance which is unto salvation is not to be regretted in life. There are multitudes who have discovered themselves to be sinners against God. They have grieved that they abused his goodness. With godly sorrow they have forsaken their sins, and are now walking in the ways of the Lord. Go to one and another of them, and ask them if they regret that they have repented of their sins; and what would be their response? It would be, "I only regret that I no sooner forsook the ways of sin; I have found more joy in one day's experience since I repented, than in all my life before." Multitudes have I seen, who have exercised repentance: not one have I found among them all who would say that they regretted it. Not one have I found who would not say, "I never before knew any thing of true happiness."

Repentance which is unto salvation is not to be regretted in death.

A youth in the bright morning of life discovered that her heart was at enmity with God, and that the condemnation of his law rested upon her. With deep contri-

tion of heart she confessed her sins against God, and sought forgiveness through a Saviour's blood. She found peace to her soul, her heart glowed with inexpressible love to God, and her lips spoke forth the Saviour's praise. At length, disease brought her to the gates of death. Then bright prospects beamed upon her vision, and angels seemed to beckon her to a brighter world.

" 'I am going home,' she murmured in faint and peaceful tone,  
'Rich joys are treasured for me there, this world hath never known.  
I am going home; soon shall I reach my Father's house above,  
And dwell forever in his smiles, encircled by his love.' "

Many in a dying hour have felt a gratitude which no language could express, that ever they were led to repent of their sins.

Think of another, who has passed from the scenes of time. Angels have conveyed him to the realms of glory. He has come literally to the New Jerusalem, and to the church of the first-born, and to an innumerable company of angels. Now he looks back to earth, and remembers the hour when, with a heart broken for his sins, he turned to God. He looks back to the spot where he knelt in prayer and gave himself away to Christ. Does he look back with regret? Ah, no! There will be no sorrow there. They that mourn shall be comforted. They who have shed tears of godly sorrow here, shall there have all tears wiped away.

We entreat you who have hitherto lived in sin, to repent. If you repent this day, this hour, you will never regret it. Through the blood of the Lamb, re-

pentance will bring you peace in life, hope in death, and eternal felicity beyond the grave. O, what an event is repentance! "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

But should you continue to neglect repentance, and persevere in the ways of sin, then will you regret it when you come to die. When you pass into eternity, and find yourself shut out of heaven, and consigned to outer darkness, then will you mourn. With everlasting regrets you will look back to the space given you for repentance, and send forth the bitter lamentation, "the harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."

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#### TAKING CHRIST'S YOKE.

NONE ever find rest to their souls who are not disposed to take the yoke of Christ upon them. Cease to do evil. Learn to do well. A life reformed upon Christian principles is the best evidence of repentance. Sin must be hated, and duty must be loved, if we would walk with God.

It is in the performance of some duty which implies the yielding of the heart, the consecration of the life to Christ, that such as seek, generally find the Saviour.

When the heart yields to God in the performance of duty, there is no longer any controversy between the sinner and God. Until the heart thus yields, the sinner resists the truth and the Spirit of God. They who are not willing to forsake every known sin, and perform



every known duty, stand in an attitude of rebellion against God. All such as seek the Saviour in that attitude seek in vain. Many who are anxious, hold back in reference to the abandonment of some sin or the performance of some duty, till the Spirit forsakes them for ever.

If we would be reconciled to God, we must be willing to serve him. And when we begin to serve him we are his, and he is ours. Regeneration is instantaneous. Conviction may precede, and confession and formal consecration may follow regeneration. Nor is the precise point when regeneration takes place always known by those who experience it. But no one can be both for and against God. There is a point where enmity and rebellion cease, and friendship and obedience begin, and that is the point of passing from death unto life.

While a revival of religion was in progress in a certain town in the western part of Massachusetts, some conversation occurred in a family there about the large number who were attending to the subject of religion, and commencing a new life. During the conversation, the husband and father remarked that he, too, meant to do his duty. These words deeply interested a little daughter of his, who, though only nine years of age, had recently given her heart to God, and become a happy Christian. The next morning, after breakfast, she came and handed the Bible to her father. "What do you wish, my child?" he exclaimed. "My dear father," she replied, "you said you meant to do your duty, and I want you to read and pray with us." "My dear child,"

said he, "I can not do it; I am unused to prayer; if you choose, you may read and pray." She read a chapter, and knelt down to pray. She had not prayed long before her father was kneeling by her side. When she closed her prayer, he began to pray. With tears he confessed the sins of a prayerless life, and earnestly supplicated mercy for himself and for his family. There the Saviour spoke peace to his soul. He arose from his knees, rejoicing in a Saviour's love. Speaking of the transaction afterwards, he remarked, "There I erected my family altar, and there it shall stand as long as I live."

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#### ACCEPTANCE FOUND.

THE Psalmist exclaims, "If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?" When the sinner is convicted he feels the burden of his sins. At the close of a meeting in which sinners had been faithfully warned of their guilt and danger, one who had been for some time convicted of sin came to the minister and took him by the hand. The tears flowed down his cheeks, and he groaned under the burden of his sins. "How do you feel?" said the minister. "I feel," said he, "as if I should sink into the earth." Sometimes the burden of sin is such that it seems to the sinner as if he should sink into hell. To such as are in this state, one who has felt this burden would point out a way of deliverance.

It is safe and proper for one to bestow favors upon

another for the sake of a third person, which it would be neither safe nor proper to do for his own sake. Thus it is safe and proper for a merchant to trust a youth for goods for his father's sake, which it would be neither safe nor proper for him to do for his own sake. So it is safe and proper for God to grant favors to the sinner for Christ's sake, which it would be neither safe nor proper to do for his own sake. We must receive spiritual blessings from God through the merits of another. Acceptance with God is enjoyed only through our Lord Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul represents the Ephesian Christians to have been made "accepted in the Beloved." Let us attempt to illustrate this principle of the plan of salvation.

After David had ascended the throne of Israel, he inquired if there were any of the house of Saul left to whom he might shew favor for Jonathan's sake. They say unto him, there is one Mephibosheth who is lame in his feet. He commanded him to be brought. And David said unto him, "Fear not: I will surely shew thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land that was thy father's, and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually." And he bowed himself and said, "What is thy servant, that thou shouldst look upon such a dead dog as I am?" And so our heavenly Father looks over this ruined world, inquiring, Are there any related to Christ to whom I may shew favor for his sake? And wherever any are found who have cast an eye of faith upon Christ, who have said "Lord, *remember me,*" he says unto them, "Fear

not, I restore unto you all the heritage lost by sin, and ye shall eat bread at my table continually."

Another illustration of the principle is found in an anecdote taken from profane history: Æschylus had committed a crime, was accused, and likely to be condemned to die. In this exigency, Amyntas, his elder brother, who had performed great services for his country, and merited highly of the commonwealth, appeared in the court in his behalf. While fighting in defense of his country, one of his hands had been cut off. His plea for his guilty brother was simply to lift up the stump of his arm. The sight of this so affected the court, that they acquitted his brother immediately. So we have committed sins, the penalty of which is death. We were accused, and doomed to die. In this strait our elder brother flew to our relief. He presents before our Judge the five bleeding wounds received on Calvary, and for his sake our sins are forgiven and the curse removed. We are accepted in the Beloved. We are justified solely for what Christ has done by his sufferings in our stead. Works are no part of the ground of our justification. We are justified freely through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Works, however, are a condition of justification. Even for Christ's sake we can not be justified without repentance. But though we can not be justified without repentance, we can not be justified for our repentance, but for Christ's sake alone.

During the panic in 1857, a merchant in one of our cities was reduced to such straits that ruin seemed inevitable. The hour was near at hand that would bring

liabilities which he had not the means to meet. Darkness was thickening over him, when a man of almost unbounded wealth stepped into his store, and said, "Use my name for any amount you please." That was his salvation. So we owe what we can never pay. The day of account which we can not meet is hastening on. But Christ comes to us and says, "Use my name for whatever favors you need. Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name he will give it you." His name is all prevalent in heaven. It is all you need. "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." We are accepted in the Beloved.

Here, then, is the answer to your question, "What must I do to be saved?" Do what Christ requires you. Confess and forsake your sins, and go forward in duty as much as if your salvation depended upon it. When you have done this, trust wholly to what Christ has done for acceptance with God. The Lord taketh pleasure in those that fear him; in those that hope in his mercy. Repent and believe the Gospel. Salvation is by faith alone. But faith without works is dead. They who hope to be saved by their works will be disappointed, and they who hoped to be saved by faith without works, will share the same fate.

But you inquire, Am I "accepted in the Beloved?" If you are, you have some sense of it. You can sing from the heart,

"By Him my prayers acceptance gain,  
Although with sin defiled;  
Satan accuses me in vain,  
And I am owned a child."

If you are accepted in the Beloved, you have very humbling views of yourself. You feel that you have no worthiness that you should be called a child of God, and sit continually at his table. It seems a wonder to you that God ever regarded you, and that Christ consented to die for you.

If you are accepted in the Beloved, you are convinced of the sufficiency of Christ to meet the wants of all sinners. You have discovered that of sinners you are the chief, and that Christ died to save just such sinners as you are. Your heart responds to the declaration of the Apostle, "He is able to save them to the uttermost that came unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

If you are accepted in the Beloved, Christ is precious to you. He is precious on account of the hopes that center in him, and the blessings which he communicates. He is more precious to you than friends, than liberty, than life. He is the most precious to you of any thing in the universe. Without him nothing could afford you one ray of joy. For him you would, if need be, part with all things. To him you have consecrated your life, your all.

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#### LOOKING TO CHRIST.

WE need constantly to look away to the Cross of Christ—to Calvary. Our wants as sinners are met only in the blood of the Lamb. An atonement seems to be a felt necessity the world over. All nations have con-

trived something of the nature of an atonement as a means of reconciliation with God. They have offered sacrifices and burnt offerings from the days of Adam until the present hour. The human conscience calls for something to give it peace, which can be found only in the blood of a Mediator. The case of a poor heathen in India will illustrate somewhat the feelings of the human mind in this respect. He had been a sinner, and, as all mankind are, sometimes conscious of guilt. He felt sometimes wretched for sin. There was a load on his spirit, when something said to him, There must be blood to wash the stain away. He found that truth proclaimed in the religion in which he had been educated, and there was a response in his moral nature to the fitness of the doctrine, "Without shedding of blood there is no remission." He thought he would make a sacrifice of himself, and he pierced his sandals with sharp iron nails, and walked for miles with the blood streaming from his feet. Still the burden tarried on his soul. There was no remission by that blood. The load of guilt pressed as heavily as before. There was a void somewhere, he knew not exactly where, but he wanted something like a hand leading him up to the Great Spirit whom he had offended. Faint and exhausted by his penance, he drew near to a group who had gathered round a missionary from some Christian land. He was too weak and too wretched to notice much that was going on. But suddenly the words of the speaker arrested his attention: "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son." He paused and leaned upon his staff. His face

lighted up with animation. The great demand of his soul was met. "This is just what I want, just what I want," he cried, and threw away his implements of self-torture, and laid down with cheerful alacrity his burden at the cross.

The blood of Jesus Christ is the divinely appointed and the divinely accepted sacrifice and satisfaction for sin. It is sufficient for the chiefest of sinners. It removes the reason for punishment so far as regards the penitent. It gives peace in life. There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus. It fits for heaven. For they who are there have their robes washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb.

Through the labors of Mr. Williams, a missionary on one of the Pacific isles, an old man who had been a fierce warrior and a cannibal was converted to God. He was constant in the house of God and at all the gatherings of God's people. After a while, the missionary, through whose labors he had been blessed, was called away for a season. On his return he missed the aged disciple from the church. He inquired after him, and found that he was sick. He soon called upon him, and told him he was sorry to find him sick. "Is that you!" exclaimed the old man; "Do I really hear your voice again? Then I die happy." Perceiving that he could not survive his sickness, the missionary inquired how he felt at the thought of dying. He replied, "I have been in great trouble this morning, but now I am happy. I thought I saw an immense mountain with steep sides. I tried to climb it, but when I had got up some distance



I lost my hold and fell to the bottom. Wearied with toil, and sad with disappointment, I went to a distance and sat down to weep. But while I was weeping, I saw a drop of blood fall on that mountain, and in a moment it vanished away." "What do you mean by that?" inquired the missionary. "That mountain," said he, "was my sins; the drop which fell upon it was one drop of the precious blood of Christ, by which the mountain of my guilt has been washed away."

"Not all the blood of beasts  
On Jewish altars slain,  
Could give the guilty conscience peace,  
Or take away the stain.  
But Christ, the heavenly Lamb,  
Takes all our sins away;  
A sacrifice of nobler name,  
And richer blood than they."

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#### A STAND TAKEN.

A YOUNG man, known to the writer, had serious thoughts upon the subject of religion. At times he felt that he was in a lost condition, and ought to do something to secure his salvation. Many were the promises he made of future amendment. But still he was undecided, and often led by pleasant companions into scenes which he no sooner left than he regretted having visited. At length he felt that he must take a stand or perish; he must turn or die. It seemed to him that he had come to the very verge of the precipice. He felt that it would do for him no longer to act against his convic-

tions, no longer to resist the Holy Spirit. Retiring to his room, he wrote the following resolutions :

“1. *Resolved*, That I will henceforth make conscience my guide, aided by the word and providence of God.

2. *Resolved*, That upon every subject of duty I will inquire simply what is the will of God, and that when I have discovered the will of God in reference to any subject upon which I am to act, I will obey that will, all things else to the contrary notwithstanding.

3. *Resolved*, That I will not enter upon the duties of any day till I have examined the relations which I sustain, the motives which ought to actuate me, and come to the purpose that in all I think, and say, and do, I will strive to glorify God.

4. *Resolved*, That I will at no time retire to rest till I have examined my life during the day, sought pardon for sins committed, rendered thanks for mercies received, and obtained satisfaction that I am in all things reconciled to God, and prepared to meet death and the judgment.”

He then knelt down and prayed over these resolutions, and earnestly besought God to enable him to lead a new life.

Henceforth he resisted temptation. Finding him decided, his acquaintance soon ceased tempting him astray. And, following the dictates of conscience and the calls of the Spirit, he found rest to his soul.

In some way, all who would turn from the ways of death must take a stand. Until this stand is taken, the Spirit is resisted, temptation is armed with power, and

the course is downward. Irresolution ruins hundreds of thousands. The soul is under the dominion of darkness till the decision is made to yield to the voice of conscience and the call of God. O, then, if you would escape from the bondage of sin, from the wrath to come, no longer halt between two opinions. Be resolved what to do, before the Spirit takes its everlasting flight.

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#### HOW SINNERS SHOULD PRAY.

“LORD, what wilt thou have me to do?” Though Saul had been before God with a form of prayer, he had never till now prayed. When Jesus spake to him from heaven, he cried from the heart, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” And it was proclaimed from heaven, “Behold, he prayeth.” If we can understand the elements of this prayer, we can understand how a sinner must pray to find acceptance with God.

There is implied in this prayer a renunciation of the world and of the devil. Other lords beside the true God had held dominion over Saul. But now their reign is broken, and their authority forever renounced. What all created beings would have him do was now no rule of action to him. The applause to be gained for persecuting the disciples of Christ, he discarded. He exchanged that for the reproach of Christ. The world was henceforth crucified to him, and he to the world. While other things have dominion over us, we can not in sincerity pray, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” No man can serve two masters. Riches,

honors, pleasures, the applause of the world, all that has had or would have dominion over us, must be forever renounced, and the Lord alone enthroned upon our hearts. Otherwise we can not in sincerity pray, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

This prayer implies entire consecration to God. By it Paul placed himself in the relation of a steward to God. So far as moral obligation was concerned, it is true he had always stood in that relation. But now he voluntarily placed himself in it. His life, time, talents, property, all were by this prayer laid at the feet of the Saviour. Only let it be plain to him how it was the will of God that he should employ any or all of these, and he was not only willing, but determined so to employ them. Had there been any thing he was not willing to employ for God as He would have him, any thing he was not willing to do that God required, how could he offer the prayer, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Such a prayer, offered in sincerity, covers our whole being, all that we have and all that we are, for time and eternity. Henceforth, to withhold any thing of service or suffering, of what we have and what we are, from God, would be retracting this prayer.

This prayer implies a disposition to seek after a knowledge of the will of God. Paul desired divine instruction. He made use of the means God furnished him to know what the Lord had given him to do. How could he offer this prayer in sincerity, and use no means to know what the will of God was? An unwill-

lingness to know our duty is an unwillingness to do it, and indifference about the knowledge of our duty is indifference about the discharge of it. We should carefully consult the providence of God and the word of God, that we may know his will. We should be willing to receive instruction from those whom God has appointed as religious teachers. We should pray for and follow out the teachings of his Spirit.

There are many prayers offered up to God, where there is no determination or readiness to do his will and serve him. In such a state of mind, prayer can not be heard. But when the sinner is willing to forsake all things for Christ, and yield himself wholly to God, he will be heard. Let those who have long prayed and not been heard, examine their case, and they will find that there are sins which they have not abandoned, and duties which they have not performed. Let such from the depths of their heart pray, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" and answers of peace will be given them.

True religion, so far as our conduct is concerned, is to do the will of God. It is obedience. Sin is disobedience. Christ became the author of eternal salvation to those who obey him. He declared, "If any man love me, he will keep my words." The test of religious experience is the life. That religious experience which results in the reformation of the life, the hearty forsaking of all sin, and performance of all duty, is genuine. That which does not so result is spurious. What the true Christian does he does unto the Lord,

and not to men. The conduct of others toward him is not the guide of his actions towards them, but the will of God.

“Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” Does your life correspond to such a prayer? Then it is different from what it once was. Then will you be found conferring not with flesh and blood, but cheerfully obeying all the precepts of the Gospel.

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TRUE SUBMISSION.

“I WILL bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him.”

A selfish religion is doubtless to be abhorred. They who serve God merely for the happiness to be found in his service, will fail both of happiness and salvation.

God is infinitely amiable in his displeasure against sin, as well as in his approbation of holiness. He is just as truly benevolent in affixing the penalty to the law, as in giving his Son to die for its transgressors. The penitent sinner is willing to bear the indignation of the Lord, because it is just, it is right.

“Should sudden vengeance seize my breath,  
I must pronounce thee just in death;  
And if my soul were sent to hell,  
Thy righteous law approves it well.”

Who can doubt that these words express true religious experience? The penalty annexed to the law is right. Hence the soul that is enlightened to see things as they are, feels that the law ought to be sustained.

It would not wish to be saved, that is, from wrath punishment, at the expense of the law. A benevolent regard for God and the good of the universe would prevent such a wish. The penitent soul would rather bear the indignation of the Lord forever, than to be saved in such a manner. To a soul thus enlightened there could be no salvation only through Christ, by whose blood the law can be sustained, the indignation of the Lord against sin be expressed, while the sinner is pardoned. In a word, as sinners we must exercise unconditional submission to God. A child has grievously transgressed the parent's commands, and done immense mischief. It comes and casts itself at the feet of the parent, saying, "I have greatly sinned; inflict upon me any punishment you please, for no punishment can be beyond my deserts." Could any other than this be the right feeling? And is it not proper that the sinner should throw himself into the hands of his Heavenly Father, to do with him as seemeth good in His sight? This is the broken heart and the contrite spirit which are God's acceptable sacrifice.

This unconditional submission to God is far from being an unhappy state of mind. Suppose a person who has been overwhelmed with fears and anxieties about his salvation, finds wrought in his soul a sweet submission to God, a willingness to be in his hands to be disposed of for time and eternity, as seemeth good in his sight—will he not enjoy peace?

The source of true joy is God, not our own frames

or hopes. "Rejoice in the Lord always." In order to this, God, his law, his glory, must rise in our hearts above all interests of our own. When this is the case, whatever may be our circumstances, we may rejoice.

This unconditional submission prepares the soul to realize the love of God in giving his Son to die for sinners. They who exercise it see the necessity and excellency of the way of salvation through the atonement. They feel that salvation is all of grace. Christ bore the indignation of the Lord in their stead. Thus God's government is sustained, while their sins are forgiven. They feel that they stand on a firm foundation, and they rejoice.

We take the place before God which his law assigns us. Then we shall be exalted to taste his mercy, to enjoy his presence, and finally to celebrate redeeming love in the songs of eternity. I could not have properly murmured had I been cast for ever into outer darkness. Oh, how then must I praise, if there is extended to me a welcome to the glories of heaven!

Let the anxious realize that before honor is humility. Abasement must precede exaltation. Sinners must accept the punishment of their sins, before they can taste God's forgiving love. But when sinners are willing "to lie infinitely low before God," then He bestows his pardoning mercy upon them. They who throw themselves into God's hands, to be saved or lost as seems good to Him, have in that sweet peace which they enjoy, a pledge of salvation. They never will perish.



Let the backslider, too, apply this subject to his case. Let him humble himself sufficiently low before God, let him bear the indignation of the Lord, because he has sinned against him, and his backslidings will be healed, and the joy of God's salvation will be restored unto him.

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#### CONSECRATION TO GOD.

CONSECRATION to God is a voluntary recognition of God's complete right in us, our affections, our powers of body and mind, our influence, our property, our all. By improvement and by use we must make the utmost of what we have and are for God, if we would be consecrated to him.

In the diary of President Edwards is found recorded the following act of consecration. We bring it forward as a proper illustration of what is to be understood by it.

"I have this day been before God, and given myself, all that I am and have, to God, so that I am in no respect my own. I can challenge no right to myself, in this understanding, this will, these affections. Neither have I any right to this body, to any of its members; no right to this tongue, these feet, these eyes, these ears. I have given myself clean away."

Without entire consecration to God, there is no union with him, and no service which is acceptable to him. They seek him in vain who do not give themselves away to him. It is a reasonable service to pre-

sent yourselves a living sacrifice unto God. When this consecration is made, acceptance is found with God. None were ever rejected who gave themselves away to him. His Spirit dwells in the hearts of the consecrated. His ears are open to their cry. They taste the wonders of his love, and see the triumphs of his grace.

Whatever forms of religion you may have, whatever experience or hopes, unless you are entirely consecrated to God, you are in a state of condemnation, and will ultimately be rejected. Are you thus consecrated? There are some plain evidences which will enable you to decide this matter.

1. Do you habitually recognize God's right in you? Is it the constant frame of your minds that you are not your own, that you must be about your Father's business?

2. Do you serve God? In respect to service, there is a difference between those who are and those who are not consecrated to God. Paul said, "Whose I am, and whom I serve." In a certain town in Massachusetts, a subscription was circulated for foreign missions. The collector commenced his course in a part of the town where a lady was inquiring the way to heaven. She subscribed as usual. In a few days after, she found the Saviour. Her pastor called upon her, and after telling him what the Lord had done for her soul, she said to him, "Do you know where I can find our collector for missions? I wish to double my subscription." It is vain to profess consecration to God, and

then contribute according to your ability no more than those who are still living in enmity to him, when such a cause is presented for your contributions.

Consecration must be evidenced by actual work for God. A negative religion is too common. The subjects of it exhibit no visible difference from the world, except by occasionally visiting the communion table. A prayer meeting is to be sustained, but they do nothing towards it. A Sabbath school is to be kept in operation, but they contribute to it neither their sympathies, nor their labors, nor their prayers. Laborers are needed to plant the standard of the cross on heathen shores, and point the benighted to the Star of Bethlehem, but they will neither go themselves, nor give their children for the work. Personal effort is required to converse and pray with the impenitent, to look after neglected children and bring them to the Sabbath school; in a word, to perform missionary work among the perishing, around the church, but they neglect or refuse to engage in it. But without constant service in the vineyard of the Lord, a readiness to improve every opportunity for the advancement of his kingdom, there is no consecration to him.

“Consecration is going out into the world where God Almighty is, and using every power for his glory. It is taking all advantages as trust funds, as confidential debts owed to God. It is simply dedicating one’s life in its whole flow to God’s service.”

“Brother,” said a Christian to another, who was speaking of the sacrifices involved in the maintenance

and propagation of religion, "you are a merchant. Now suppose you employ a clerk to sell goods, and a schoolmaster to teach your children, and you order your clerk to pay the schoolmaster out of the store, such an amount for his services in teaching. Suppose, further, that your clerk complains that he had to pay the schoolmaster his salary, and should speak of the sacrifices he was making to do it; what would you say to this?" "Why," said the merchant, "I should say it was preposterous." "Well," said the brother, "God employs you to sell goods, as his clerk, and your minister he employs to teach his children; and he requires you to pay that minister's salary, and to meet all other claims upon the love and bounty of your Divine Master, out of the income of that store. Now do you call this your liberality, and say that you are making sacrifices? No, you are just as much bound to sell goods for God and for his cause, as the minister and the missionary are to preach for him; and if you think otherwise, you thereby prove that you are not the Lord's, but that you still claim to be your own. You live unto yourself. You act as if you were independent of God. You are living without God in the world, and this is practical atheism."

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#### GROWTH IN GRACE.

"Grow in grace."

GROWTH is a principle in nature. So it is represented to be in grace. The path of the just is as the

shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

God has provided the Christian with the means of grace for the purpose of his progress in holiness. With all that God has done to enable him to make progress, he must be guilty if he does not grow in grace. Should you send your son to school where he was favored with the best means of intellectual improvement, and find that after months, and even years, of the enjoyment of such privileges, he had made no attainment, would you not feel that he had incurred great guilt? Yet how often do Christians enjoy for years the means of grace, and make no progress. How few are found to have made such attainments as a faithful improvement of the means of grace would have secured? But God holds all accountable for the best improvement of all their privileges.

Christians should grow in grace, because it is the only way of preservation from falling. If you will remark, this passage, "Grow in grace," follows immediately the seventeenth verse, where the apostle says, "Beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness; but grow in grace." He puts the one after the other, as if the one must be the means of the other. There had been some in the apostle's days who had wrested certain hard expressions of the apostle Paul, and had wrested them to their own destruction. And therefore the apostle warns Christians to take heed lest they be led away by

the error of the wicked, and so fall from their own steadfastness. And in order that they might know how to stand and to be preserved from falling, he gives them the direction, "Grow in grace," for the way to be steadfast is to go forward. There is no standing except by progression. If you see a simple thing rolling along your floor at home, it will always stand upright so long as it rolls; but when it stops, down it goes. So with the Christian. As long as he is in motion, so long he stands; but if it were possible for the heavenly motion to stop, the Christian would fall from his steadfastness. The way to stand, then, is to go forward; the way to be steadfast is to progress; the way still to be alive according to the apostle is to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

Christians should grow in grace, because their highest usefulness depends upon their growth in grace. The very progress which growing Christians make, impresses the minds of their friends and acquaintances. It causes them to feel that there is a power and excellency in the religion of the Cross. Thus they are more and more constrained to acknowledge that there is a difference between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not. The growing Christian encourages the hearts of those who are engaged in efforts to promote religion. He stirs up his fellow Christians to press forward in the divine life. The growing Christian more and more reflects the image of his Saviour. He possesses more of the spirit of Christ, enjoys more

of the divine presence, becomes more prevalent in prayer, and has more disposition and qualification to engage in active labors in the vineyard of the Lord. Show me a community of growing Christians, and I will show you one where the truth is taking effect upon the hearts of the impenitent and constraining them to turn to God.

Christians should grow in grace, because it is essential to their happiness. The growing Christian has the satisfaction of gaining the victory over spiritual foes. The things which once brought darkness upon his mind he now avoids. Clearer and broader views of divine things open to his mind. He finds increased delight in drawing nigh to God, in acts of praise and prayer. His visions of the glories of heaven are brighter, and his earnestness of the blessed inheritance which God has in reserve for those that love him are more sweet and constant. It is the growing Christian whose experience prompts him to sing,

“The hill of Zion yields  
A thousand sacred sweets,  
Before we reach the heavenly fields,  
Or walk the golden streets.  
Then let our songs abound,  
And every tear be dry,  
We’re marching through Immanuel’s ground,  
To fairer worlds on high.”

“THEY GO FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH.”

How to make progress in the divine life, is a question which many Christians have solved only by a long and painful experience ; and others have not solved it at all to any purpose. Though such is the case, the way of advancement in holiness is as plain as the way of advancement in any mental attainment.

There must be effort to grow in grace. Regeneration is an instantaneous work. By that, holiness commences in the heart. Sanctification is progressive. By that, the good work begun in regeneration is carried forward to a full development. Regeneration plants the tree ; but the tree that has been planted in grace must be cultivated. And the cultivation of the heart must have the first place in the purposes and plans of the Christian. Many give the attainment of holiness a subordinate place. Such never grow in grace. But humility, benevolence, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity, and, in short, every thing pertaining to Christian character, under the rain and sunshine of the Gospel, will grow by culture.

If you would grow in grace you must exercise constant watchfulness. “Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.” Evil is most easily checked in its beginnings. Especially is this true of the exercises of the heart. Every voluntary exercise tends to reproduce itself. Hence it is written, “He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption ; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life ever-



lasting." Hence, giving way to covetousness, to anger and retaliation, to suspicion and ill will, or to indolence and superficiality in the duties of religion, is most fatal to progress. Watch against your besetting sins, that they may be mortified. Watch, that you may resist the devil. Watch, that every gracious exercise may be kept alive in your heart, and that all the streams proceeding from it may be streams of life.

"Oh, watch and fight and pray,  
The battle ne'er give o'er;  
Renew it boldly every day,  
And help divine implore."

Another means of growth in grace is growth in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Look at some expressions of Paul, and see how the knowledge of Jesus Christ affected his character. "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him." Again, "God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world." And again, "the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again." In his case the knowledge of Christ made all things earthly appear insignificant, annihilated the

power of the world's temptations, and constrained to the consecration of all to the service of God. This it will do still. Seek, then, to increase in the knowledge of Christ. Learn more of his person, his condescension, his love, his offices, his final appearing, and everlasting glory, as the center of the praises of heaven. This you may do by a daily study of the Scriptures and constant attendance upon the means of grace.

In order to growth in grace there must be a large faith in the provisions made for us in Jesus Christ. All the means we employ will avail nothing to our sanctification, only as through them the divine Spirit is communicated to our hearts. We are delivered from sin only through Christ. And we need such faith as was exhibited by the leprous man, when he cried, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." Wearied with his own efforts to cease to do evil and learn to do well, Paul exclaimed, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" But he found in Christ a deliverer; for he exclaimed with the same breath, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Through Jesus Christ, God is ready to impart to all deliverance from sin. "This is the will of God, even your sanctification." There is a complete fullness of grace in Jesus Christ. But there must be faith in order to experience it in our sanctification. "According to your faith be it unto you." Labor to get just conceptions of what Christ is able to do for you, and let not a stinted faith cut off those

streams of grace that would carry purity and joy to your heart.

Earnest personal effort to promote the kingdom of God on earth is essential to growth in grace. "The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered also himself." Contribute of your substance to the cause of God. Engage personally in efforts to save souls, abound in labors of love, and your course will be onward and upward. God bestows grace upon those who improve it in his service. To him that improves what he hath shall more be given.

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#### HINDRANCES TO CHRISTIAN PROGRESS.

RESTING in present attainments is fatal to progress. Christians ought to grow in grace and in knowledge. They ought to press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. But instead of ever aiming higher and higher, we are inclined to live upon our past experience, and content ourselves with the quiet admiration of our own graces. "When we have reached certain spots in our heavenward pilgrimage, we are apt to say to ourselves, Now that we have got so far we need not be in a hurry, we may sit down and enjoy ourselves. And we sit so long, and we are so well satisfied with the position we have gained, that we do not care to get up again, and perhaps we end as Christian did in the pleasant arbor, by falling asleep and losing our roll. We forget that

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"Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,  
Is our destined end or way ;  
But to live that each to-morrow  
Finds us further than to-day."

We can not stand still in the Christian course. When we cease to go forward we go backward. We must follow on to know the Lord. We can not live upon past experience. It is present experience that makes past experience reliable.

"Grace led my roving feet  
To tread the heavenly road ;  
And new supplies each hour I meet,  
While pressing on to God."

Unless the inward man is renewed day by day, our faith will be weak, our hope dim, and our joys will vanish away. They who rely wholly on past experience, not only fail of progress, but often come into sad straits.

A certain professor was in the habit of comforting himself by his past experience entirely. To this he looked for evidence of a good hope of heaven. When fears arose about his religious estate, he would quiet them by a consideration of his former experience. Finally he wrote it off and placed it in his drawer, that whenever he desired to comfort himself with the hope of heaven he might read it. At length he was laid upon a bed of sickness, and felt the alarms of death. He sent one of his household servants to bring his religious experience from his drawer, but behold ! it was so eaten by the mice that it was illegible. Let such ex-

amples be shunned. Instead of relying upon past experience, count not yourself to have apprehended, but this one thing do: leaving the things which are behind, and reaching forth to those which are before, press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Some fail of progress because their living to God is in the future. They seem to exemplify the saying of Pope: "Man never is, but always to be blessed." They are not perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord. They are not living wholly consecrated to God. They mean at some future time to live more as they should. They mean, when differently situated, to be more faithful and active in the service of God. Now, the way to lead a holy life to-morrow, is to lead a holy life to-day. The better you serve God to-day, the more preparation will you have to serve him to-morrow. If you neglect your duty to-day, you can not perform your duty so well to-morrow, on account of that neglect. Hence, those who are living negligently in the present, in the expectation of being more devoted in the future, seldom realize their expectations. They are generally farther and farther from God as time rolls on. To-day "work out thy salvation with fear and trembling." Now "do with thy might whatsoever thy hand findeth to do." Then shall thy path be "like the rising light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

Another hindrance to Christian progress consists in false views on the subject of Christian attainment.

Some cherish the belief that seasons of decay in spiritual affectations, of backsliding, and lukewarmness in religion, are the common lot of Christians, if not necessary to be expected, and not to be considered very criminal. Now, constant progress is attainable. From the time of their conversion to God the course of some Christians has been onward and upward. God is greatly displeased with those who forsake their first love. Backsliding always indicates the neglect of prayer and Christian duty. It is not only highly offensive to God, but exceedingly detrimental to the interests of religion.

Another hindrance to Christian progress consists in an excess of wordly business. Diligence in business is favorable to growth in grace. The indolent and the loafing make no advancement in the divine life. But diligence in business and a proper care of the soul are not inconsistent with each other. No man should have such an amount of business as will leave no time for the cultivation of the heart. A man hurries away to his store or shop in the morning, without reading the Scriptures or offering prayer, either in the family or the closet. His business arrangements leave no time for religious reading,—no time to read, *only* a little news about the markets. At night he goes home exhausted. His children have retired, and, omitting family worship, he ejaculates a few words of prayer, and retires. It is vain for such to expect progress in holiness. Their business will prosper without time devoted to it, as well as their souls.

## EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIAN PROGRESS.

THERE are tests by which Christians may know that they are making progress in the divine life. The growing Christian will have a more abiding feeling that the great value of life is in the good results that may be accomplished by it. He will redeem the time. He will be less moved by worldly trials and adversities. He will have a more constant, entire and quiet trust in God. He will be more earnest to serve God in the improvement of every opportunity to do good. He will be more reliable in any enterprise or any station to promote the cause of Christ.

But there are two evidences of Christian progress, not often dwelt upon, which seem to me to meet every case. Where these exist, they may be considered a sure index of growth, because all others exist with them.

The first of these is the government of the tongue. "If any man among you seemeth to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, that man's religion is vain." "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able to bridle the whole body." "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." If a Christian has attained to watchfulness over the tongue, if he keeps it from deceit, if in all his speech he represents things as they are, if he obeys the Scripture rule in speaking of the faults of others, if he abandons in his practice, tattling, tale-bearing, and evil-speaking, if he backbiteth not

with his tongue, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor; if, in a word, the streams that flow from his tongue are all from a sweet fountain, then has he indeed made great spiritual conquests. "Happy is he who condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth" in this matter. Happy he who does not by his words show to others that he is too much under the dominion of sin.

Another proof of growth consists in loving our enemies. This is one of the high duties of Christianity. It indicates a high degree of that love which is the fulfilling of the law. Christ distinctly enjoined this. "But I say unto you, Love your enemies; bless them which persecute you; bless, and curse not." When injured, we are tempted to inflict injury in turn. When we overcome this disposition of the natural heart, and render good for evil, we have made attainments in the Christian life. The disciples inquired of Christ, "How oft shall my brother trespass against me, and I forgive him; till seven times? Jesus said unto him, I say not unto thee, until seven times, but until seventy times seven." If we love our enemies, we can forgive them and show them kindness. "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

We are not called upon to approve of sin. So far as concerns the *conduct* of those who injure us, we are to abhor it; but when we cherish animosity toward



their *persons*, it is another thing. We should abstain from all acts of retaliation; we should be friendly, so that all that would be wanting to have mutual acts of friendship between us and those who have injured us would be for them to reciprocate our feelings and conduct.

The things which we have spoken of as evidences of Christian progress imply not only a high degree of that love which is the fulfilling of the law, but also a high degree of faith. We must believe that it is better to obey God than to follow where the evil propensities of the heart or the maxims of the world would lead us, in order to bridle the tongue and love our enemies. The opposite course to this is of the world. But "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

Finally, where these things exist, you will find large measures of the Holy Ghost, much love to the people of God and to the souls of men. Nothing seems to obstruct the happiness and usefulness of Christians. They can pray and co-operate together, strengthen each other's hands and encourage each other's hearts. Have you these evidences of Christian progress? Had you rather speak of the virtues than of the faults of others? Would you sooner go and take one by the hand and exhort him to duty, and pray with him, than to backbite him with your tongue? Is the tale-bearing, tattling and evil-speaking, so common, disagreeable to you? Can you cherish pure benevolence toward your enemies? Can you sincerely pray for them?

Can you from the heart forgive as you hope to be forgiven?

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INTEGRITY.

DAVID made a good resolution when he said, "As for me, I will walk in mine integrity."

A man who walks in his integrity is true to his convictions of right. In his esteem, righteousness is better than convenience or gain.

Integrity is essential to Christian character. If a man deceives his neighbor to secure a profitable bargain, or travels upon the Sabbath because he can thus save time and expense, he is untrue to his own convictions of right. Where, then, is his supreme love to God? His governing principle must be self-interest, for he sacrifices right to temporal advantage. The love of God is not in him. He still remains in the bonds of impiety.

All who would escape from the bondage of sin, and lead a Christian life, should have settled principles of integrity. A man is traveling, and Saturday night arrives. He should not have to hesitate and debate with himself whether he should go on upon the Sabbath. His mind should be settled in reference to such things. Daniel's mind was settled to obey God. When tempted to neglect the duty of prayer, he did not have to hesitate whether he should pray to God or not. Fixed principles of integrity broke the power of temptation, and saved him from sin. Many who have fallen

a prey to temptation, would have been fortified against it and delivered from its power by fixed principles of integrity.

Integrity is better than great riches. No wealth can compensate for the loss of it. "The little that a righteous man hath is better than the treasures of many wicked." Gain gotten by the sacrifice of right is loss. It makes a man bankrupt in character.

To walk in integrity is always safest and best. "He that walketh uprightly walketh surely." If walking in integrity brings trouble upon us, it does not bring regret. That trouble which results from the violation of the principles of righteousness is unmitigated by consolation, is accompanied with self-reproach and the displeasure of God. But all the trials suffered for righteousness' sake are alleviated by the approbation of conscience and the presence and promises of God. For his integrity Daniel was cast into the lions' den, but God shut the lions' mouths. He cast over Daniel the shield of his protection, and convinced an ungodly nation of his existence and of his favor to such as walk in uprightness before him.

They who walk in integrity are benefactors to their race. Their example is a light to enable men to shun the rocks and quicksands on which human hopes and human happiness have been so often wrecked. The more they are called to suffer for righteousness' sake, the more emphatically is this true of them. When sacrifices are made and sufferings endured in maintaining truth and righteousness, multitudes discover their

beauty and excellence, and espouse their cause. Love to man, therefore, as well as love to God, is wanting in those who do not walk in integrity. The man who sets an example of unswerving integrity is a benefactor to his race.

In addition to all this, the practice of integrity is the most favorable to worldly prosperity. The moral government of the world is surely designed to favor righteousness. "Take no thought, saying, What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewithal shall we be clothed? But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." The integrity of Joseph, though for a time it involved him in trouble, ultimately raised him to the highest honor to which any subject of the nation could aspire. The integrity of Daniel was rewarded with great temporal advantages. Innumerable instances might be cited to prove that unswerving integrity is the sure basis of a sound prosperity. It is the voice of general experience. It would be an impeachment of God's government, that in the interests of this world honesty were no better than dishonesty, or that there is no other way to success in business but a disregard of the principles of integrity.

For want of integrity many people are at variance with themselves. They act against their convictions of right. Conscience reproves; then they resolve to amend their ways. But for want of fixed principles of integrity, when some peculiar temptation arises they again do violence to their convictions of right. Thus

they go on, often self-condemned and unhappy. In fact, the motives are innumerable for every one to come to the resolution, "As for me, I will walk in mine integrity."

If you would attain to this integrity of character, cultivate faith in God. "His eyes behold, and his eyelids try the children of men." He has said, "Say ye to the righteous, it shall be well with him." It is in right doing that you have a warrant to trust him, and can expect acceptance with him.

Cultivate a sense of the constant presence of God. Let the language of your heart be, "Thou, God, seest me." This is the method by which Joseph overcame his temptations to sin. What an answer to temptation! "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

Place obedience to your convictions of right before the approbation of your fellow-men. The fear of man bringeth a snare. Many go counter to their convictions of right to please their fellow-men. They often do this when they would please just as well if true to their convictions of right. They will be most generally and highly esteemed by others, who walk in their integrity.

Beware of trusting your own strength. God is able to keep you from falling. His help implore. Meditation and prayer help to secure that grace which is sufficient for us. Not unfrequently can those who fall a prey to temptation look to the neglect of prayer as the cause. Visit the mercy-seat, and you will obtain grace for every time of need.

## STEADFASTNESS.

“ALWAYS abounding in the work of the Lord.” But few sufficiently regard this injunction of the Apostle. The responsibility which rests upon the members of the church to fill their posts of duty is too little felt. The cause of God greatly suffers as the consequence. There is a post of duty for every brother and sister in the church, as well as for the ministers of the Cross. The highest prosperity of the church can never be reached till all are ready to occupy their places and faithfully discharge their duties. I will illustrate the idea I wish to enforce. Take the prayer-meeting. Suppose a few only of the brethren and sisters of the neighborhood where it is appointed attend, and a part only of those who do attend are willing to speak and pray as they have ability and opportunity. The meeting in such a case would be comparatively powerless. On the contrary, suppose all in the neighborhood to be there, and each one ready for duty, it would be felt that God was there of a truth, and the meeting would exert a powerful influence. It would be a token of prosperity to Zion.

Men, to be useful, must be reliable, sure to be at their posts of duty when the battles of the Lord are going forward. But some act only occasionally for God. They are regular in what they do for themselves, but irregular in what they do for God. They are at the post of duty to-day, but disappoint our expectation by being absent to-morrow. They cheer us by being

occasionally with us, but distress us by their absence when they are most needed. In reference to them, Solomon has set forth the case exactly. "Confidence in an unfaithful man is like a foot out of joint." It hinders our movements.

Some, after they have been specially drummed up to duty, work one day and rest fifty. This ought not so to be. Esteem it your privilege to labor for God. Wait not to be urged, but engage cheerfully in his service. Let it be understood that you can be depended upon for both the individual and associated action which belongs to you.

Let not your pastor look in vain to see you in your place in the public worship of God. Let him not be pained by hearing of your wandering to different places of worship, and by feeling that you are exerting an influence to render the congregation unstable.

Strive to maintain constantly the spirit of love and zeal. Be always ready for every good word and work. If the church do not prosper, let it not be because you are inconstant and unreliable.

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"HAPPY IS HE THAT CONDEMNETH NOT HIMSELF IN THAT  
THING WHICH HE ALLOWETH."

WE are capable of passing judgment upon our conduct, as right or wrong. A man's practice must therefore be approved or condemned by himself.

By influences from without, a person may be led into practices which he himself condemns. He may have

at heart the right feelings; but not having decision, he may be influenced by others to a wrong practice. Multitudes act against the convictions of conscience, to please others or to avoid condemning their customs. Such persons feel a regret at what they have done, a mortification from a conscious want of decision of character. They feel that they have failed to strengthen the right in themselves, and to exert a good influence over others.

A person may allow what he himself condemns, from the promptings of evil propensities within himself. For instance, from excessive love of gain a person may use a false weight or a false measure, or misrepresent a matter in business or an article in trade. Or, for self-gratification, he may indulge in what is innocent in itself considered, but which can not be used without rendering his example injurious to others. Now such a person is unhappy from the consciousness of not being what he knows he ought to be. He condemns himself for his own allowed practice.

When a person brings his practice to conformity with his judgment of what is right, when he is conscious of right intentions in all his conduct, when in the review of his actions he has the approbation of his conscience, then may it be said that he "condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth."

Such a person is happy because he enjoys the approbation of his own conscience. "This is our joy," saith Paul, "the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but



by the grace of God, we have our conversation in the world." The good man shall be satisfied from himself.

He who condemneth not himself for his allowed practices, is happy because he has confidence toward God. He takes delight in the law of the Lord. It is his meditation all the day. He finds access to the mercy-seat. He loves to engage in prayer and praise. In religious privileges and in religious duties he experiences divine blessings. He anticipates with cheerful faith the fulfillment of divine promises.

He that condemneth not himself for his allowed practices, is happy because he enjoys a feeling of security. He has no apprehensions about his conduct coming to light, or from the workings of Divine providence. He is willing to commit himself to God. What beautiful expressions of security were uttered by Luther when the storm of persecution threatened and lowered.

"Loud may the troubled ocean roar;  
In sacred peace our souls abide,  
While every nation, every shore,  
Trembles and dreads the swelling tide."

Happiness is attainable by all. Who by the grace of God may not pursue a course to which they feel impelled by the moral nature within them? God has created man capable of governing himself. In his weakness He has provided grace sufficient for him. The very fact that men condemn themselves is evidence that they might, that they ought to have pursued

a different course. No circumstances can deprive of happiness such as have the approving voice of conscience within. And no circumstances can deliver from misery those who condemn themselves in that thing which they allow.

No one can expect to meet the approbation of God while pursuing a course which he himself condemns. "Beloved, if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things." To condemn ourselves for our allowed practice is to be without peace here, without hope respecting eternity. They who stand condemned at the bar of their own conscience, must expect to stand condemned at the judgment seat of Christ.

The excuse of sinners that they would become Christians if they could only feel, is without foundation. The truth is, the only way in which sinners can go on in impenitence and finally perish, is to act against those feelings which ought to govern their conduct. Every one has feelings enough, if not resisted, to lead them to turn their feet into God's testimonies. What sinner does not feel that he ought to be reconciled to God through our Lord Jesus Christ? What sinner does not condemn himself for his life of prayerlessness and impenitence? And is not this the misery of the impenitent, that their moral nature prompts to one course of conduct, and they pursue another? No sinner could act as he feels he ought, without immediate repentance. This in authority is the highest feeling of his nature. However much of fear and distress he

may have, if he ever turns to God, it will be in obedience to the feeling that he *ought* to forsake his sins by righteousness, and his iniquities by turning unto God. Let the sinner hear the still small voice within, let him cease to resist that feeling which would lead him into the narrow way, and all will be well.

It may cost a struggle to cleave to a practice which you do not condemn. It may be crucifying to the flesh. But the result will be the approbation of your own conscience and your God. It is better to bear the frowns of men and suffer shame, than to be condemned by your own heart.

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#### CASTING ALL CARE UPON GOD.

How are we to cast our cares upon God, so that our minds may be entirely freed from the burden of them? This is what the apostle proposes, "Casting all thy care upon him." We are to do this by making duty, *i. e.* the doing of the will of God, all that ought to be done, ours, and leaving all the rest with God, confiding all the rest in his hands.

The case may be illustrated by examples. A young clergyman commenced his labors in a country parish, several hundred dollars in debt. He was much pressed by his creditor for the money, and somewhat blamed for not raising it. At the same time there was the appearance of a revival of religion commencing in his parish. This care about his pecuniary matters troubled him, and at times brought darkness upon his mind.

When he retired to the closet, clouds gathered over him. He felt that some disposition must be made of the matter, or he should not be a fit instrument to go forward with the revival, which was beginning to appear among his people. He finally resolved that he would employ all the means at his command, and live with the strictest economy, in order, as soon as possible, to meet the demands of his creditor, and then commit himself to God. From that time the Holy Ghost seemed to be poured afresh upon him. His soul was filled with joy, and the work of the Lord greatly prospered in his hands.

A young man was in the employ of a railroad company. He was required to work regularly upon the Sabbath. If he refused to comply with this requirement the prospect before him was that he would lose his place. His situation awakened anxious care, for the times were hard, and he had a family to support. He resolved to keep the Sabbath holy, and trust in God. Blessings, temporal and spiritual, descended upon him.

When the prospect of loss, by adhering to principle, tempts to wrong, go forward in the path of righteousness, and trust in God.

Again, a person feels anxious for the prosperity of Zion. He longs for the conversion and salvation of his friends and neighbors. Let him, by the faithful use of means, and by fervent prayer to God, exert himself for the accomplishment of these objects, as much as though it depended upon his fidelity. Then let him leave all in the hands of God, commit all to him.

It was from the fixed principle of casting all our care

upon God, that Mary Lyon said, "I am afraid of nothing in this world but that I shall not know and do my whole duty." When to the utmost we have endeavored to know and do our whole duty, we may leave ourselves and our all in the hands of God.

We have abundant reason thus to cast our care upon God—all our care. From all things pertaining to them, God has promised to bring to pass the best possible results, in case of all who put their trust in him. His care for them is such as to manage every thing in perfect wisdom for them. The servants of God have nothing to fear but sin. By careful attention to His word and providence, and by humble prayer, let them find out the path of duty and go forward in it, trusting in the Lord, and light and peace will attend them.

Distrust of God is a great evil. For if we take our cares upon ourselves, God has made no promise that he will take the management of them for our good. All our cares will effect nothing; but inasmuch as they hinder us in the performance of duty, they will hinder us in the attainment of objects desired. Duty is all that we do or can do, that has any bearing upon the objects of our cares. The less, then, we are burdened with cares, the better shall we be prepared for the attainment of a knowledge of our duty, and for the discharge of it.

Besides, the cares of life are too great a burden for us to bear. When unrelieved by trust in God, they crush our spirits, they prey upon our health, and unfit us for the enjoyment of the blessings strewn around us, as well as for the duties binding upon us. Why should

we bear such a burden, when we may rest it upon a Being of infinite wisdom, power and goodness?

They possess a real blessedness who cast all their cares upon God. They envy not such as walk in questionable ways. They know that a wisdom which is infinite is exercised for the welfare of those who trust in God. They see light in darkness, and find support in trials. Their life is one of cheerfulness and peace. When called to die, they can commit their souls to God, and leave all that is dear to them in his hands.

“When gladness wings my favored hour,  
Thy love my thoughts shall fill:  
Resigned when storms of sorrow lower,  
My soul shall meet thy will.  
My lifted eye, without a tear,  
The gathering storm shall see;  
My steadfast heart shall know no fear,  
That heart will rest on Thee.”

The following anecdote illustrates the faithfulness of God in caring for those who cast their care upon him: A lady who had just sat down to breakfast, had a strong impression upon her mind that she must instantly carry a loaf of bread to a poor man who lived about half a mile from her house, upon the common. Her husband wished her either to postpone taking the loaf of bread till after breakfast, or to send it by her servant; but she chose to take it herself instantly. As she approached the hut, she heard the sound of a human voice. Wishing to hear what it was, she stepped softly, unperceived, to the door. She now heard the poor man praying,

and among other things, he said, "O Lord, help me ; Lord, thou wilt help me ; thy providence can not fail ; and although my wife, self and children have no bread to eat, and it is now a whole day since we have had any, I know that thou wilt supply me though thou shouldst again rain down manna from heaven." The lady could wait no longer. She opened the door. "Yes," she replied, "God has sent you relief. Take this loaf, and be encouraged to cast your care upon Him who careth for you ; and when you ever want a loaf of bread, come to my house."

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"BLESSED ARE THEY WHO HUNGER AND THIRST AFTER RIGHTEOUSNESS, FOR THEY SHALL BE FILLED."

CHRIST says, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." This is the course pursued by every one who hungers and thirsts after righteousness. With such, no object comes into competition with the attainment of holiness. And not only is holiness the prime object of pursuit with them, but they pant after it as the hart panteth after the water brook. Their spiritual nature cries out after holiness, as their physical nature does after food and drink. Such will attain their object. They shall be filled.

1. They will use the means to secure holiness, and the means will accomplish the end. There is a connection between means and ends, more sure in the kingdom of grace than in the kingdom of nature. And shall not they who strive to make the best improvement of all

the means within their reach, advance in the divine life? Shall not they die more and more unto sin, and live more and more unto righteousness?

2. That such as hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled, is evident from the provisions of grace. Our Heavenly Father is more ready to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him, than earthly parents are to give good gifts unto their children. Christ gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. They who hunger and thirst after righteousness, will find in Christ abundant provision for their sanctification. Let the thirsty come to the fountain and drink. Let those who feel the plague of sin come to Christ, as the leper did, saying, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean;" and the response will be, "I will; be ye clean."

3. It has been the experience of multitudes, that they who hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled. Paul is an example of this. Hear him express his hungerings and thirstings after righteousness, and the result. "The good that I would, I do not, and the evil that I would not, that I do." "Oh, wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death! I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." He hungered to be delivered from sin, and he found deliverance through Jesus Christ. The same was the case with Whitefield, Wesley, Edwards, Payson, and a multitude of others who have shone as lights in the world. The provisions of grace are still the same. Why, then, are



there so few who attain to eminent holiness? Because so few hunger and thirst after righteousness. The desires of many for righteousness are so weak that they are often turned aside from its pursuit, and led away to spend their energies in chasing after the things of time and sense. But they who *hunger* and *thirst* after righteousness shall be filled. There is need, however, of a caution on this subject. It is sometimes said that Christians have just as much religion or holiness as they desire to have. This assertion needs some qualification. I may stand before a lofty mountain, or, if you please, upon its side. I may desire to stand upon its summit and view the scenes of beauty and sublimity on every side. Now this desire and its accomplishment are not simultaneous. Between the two there are many weary steps to take, many crags to climb, and many hardships to endure. But the desire leads me to gain the summit. So it is in the great work of sanctification. They who hunger and thirst after righteousness will gain their object. But much labor, watchfulness, self-denial and prayer, may often intervene. But they shall ascend to Pisgah's top, and see the glorious Canaan spread out before them in celestial beauty. To those who pant after holiness, as the weary pilgrim pants for living streams, we say, press forward. Renew your work from day to day. Though you may pass through many a hard struggle, yet, through Christ who strengtheneth you, you shall come off conquerors, and more than conquerors. But this glorious result will be gained only by the persevering. Without increasing activity, without

perpetual advancement, there can never be the attainment of the victor's crown.

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#### INTELLECTUAL CULTURE.

THE attention of private Christians needs to be called to the subject of intellectual culture. It is too much neglected. Few Christians fully realize its importance to the cause of God

God calls upon his people to improve all their talents, that they may have the more to devote to his service. The slothful servant was condemned because he returned his talent in the condition in which he received it. The faithful servant was rewarded because he had improved and thus increased his talents. This is the rule of God's dealings in reference to all talents bestowed. It applies to the faculties of the mind, the most valuable of all talents entrusted to men.

Intellectual culture should be pursued by Christians, because it enhances their usefulness. There is an influence which every individual exerts in consequence of what he is. This may be called unconscious influence. Now, other things being equal, the most intelligent exert the strongest influence. The most intelligent are the leading minds in community. Therefore Christians should excel in intellectual culture.

Besides, Christians are to exert an influence upon the minds of others, by direct effort. They are to witness for Christ. They are to persuade men to embrace the Gospel. In this work, cultivated mind is by far the

most efficient. There is a responsibility, therefore, resting upon Christians, to pursue mental culture as much as practicable. They who make no effort for intellectual culture, must be reckoned among the slothful servants who keep their lord's talent hid in a napkin.

The cultivation of the mind helps to the growth of Christian character. Knowledge and mental discipline give depth and strength to holy affections and purposes. Certainly it is more favorable to progress in the divine life, to spend leisure hours in mental improvement, than to squander them away in idleness and vain conversation.

Intellectual culture is practicable by all. Men actuated by worldly motives, such as desire for power and fame, whose way has been obstructed by as many difficulties as are experienced by private Christians generally, have made great attainments in intellectual culture. Surely, in this matter men ought to be as zealous in order to efficiency in the service of God, as others have been that they might make a figure in the world, or climb the ladder of fame. Be not among those who have no aim, no plan, for intellectual culture, and who appropriate nothing to furnish themselves with the means of promoting it. Let not every thing be spent for the body, and the mind be left to starve. The spirit which ought to animate Christians in this thing, seems to me to be exemplified in the following anecdote.

In one of the midland counties of England, a farmer, who was married and had a family, became converted to God. He soon felt an ardent desire to be useful, and

thought there was nothing he should like better than to become a teacher in a Sabbath school. But how was he to undertake this office, seeing that he himself did not know a single letter of his alphabet? He resolved to acquire the knowledge which was necessary; but not wishing to make the extent of his ignorance known, he determined to buy a horn-book, and to apply himself diligently to its study at home. On the next market-day he went to the adjoining town, and after he had transacted his business, he proceeded to the bookseller's shop. He was sadly afraid that if he inquired for a horn-book, persons would suspect that he wanted it for himself; and it was not till after he had paced up and down before the shop three or four times that he could muster courage to go in; but even then his heart failed him. While he was looking at some indifferent articles, a woman came in and said, "I want a horn-book." That sound was like music in his ears. Affecting a careless air, he said to the shopkeeper, "Ah, do you sell horn-books? One of them might be useful to my children; how much are they a-piece?" "Two-pence," was the reply. He hastily took up the first that came, paid down his two-pence, and departed with as much joy of heart as if he had found the philosopher's stone. He immediately returned to his home; and, so bent was he on his object, that, with the assistance of his wife, he had learned the whole of his letters before he went to bed. He rose up early the next morning, which was the Sabbath, entered himself as a teacher in the first class, and began teaching little children their A B C.

Thus industriously acquiring knowledge, and communicating it to others, he was soon able to read the Bible for himself, and was made the means of extensive usefulness.

Multitudes of instances might be given, in which men have greatly added to their influence and usefulness by improving their minds. You may do the same. Have a purpose, then, to cultivate your mind. Include it in your plans, carefully husband your leisure hours. Furnish yourself with good books. Strive each day to acquire something new. Often review what you have studied. Thus the field of your intellectual vision will widen every year. The powers of your mind, as well as your attainments, will be increased, and as you can see more extensively, so you can act more effectually every month than you could the preceding. Thus you will go on through life, increasing in intellectual and moral power.

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#### CONFESSION.

“CONFESS your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.”

Though we have no confessional, though to God alone we are to look for the forgiveness of our sins, yet there is a place for confessing one to another. The apostle enjoined it, and it is profitable. Confession implies sorrow for our faults and an abandonment of them. Without these it is a mere empty form. In fact, a confession of faults, where there is manifestly

no sorrow for them and no forsaking of them, is an aggravation of those faults.

Confessing our faults one to another, answers several important purposes. It is a testimony on the part of the person who has committed a fault, of his sense of the evil of it and of his sorrow for it. It tends to counteract the evil influence which he has exerted in committing the fault, and to restore confidence and good feeling between the person who has committed it and the person against whom it has been committed. It often melts the hearts of others, and prepares the way for the descent of the Holy Spirit. Hence, when Christians confess their faults one to another, and pray one for another, it is frequently the result that they are healed. When a member of a church, or a brother in the ministry, have so far committed faults as to lose their standing among those with whom they are connected, what sort of confession ought they to make, and what ought to be satisfactory? It seems to us that there are two principal characteristics to such confession. First, the offending person must be sensible of his sinfulness in the specific thing in which he is at fault. He must admit it fully and freely, without any effort to extenuate his faults. Secondly, he must satisfy his Christian friends that he is a truly penitent man. Christianity requires meekness, in dealing with the faults of our brethren. At the same time, it requires fidelity. Besides, an offending brother can not be restored to the confidence of his brethren until he satisfies them that he is a penitent man. Let there be

manifested a broken heart and a contrite spirit on account of sin, and it will prepare the way for any Christian to take an offending brother to his heart. But when those who have committed faults resent that faithful dealing which Christian love constrains others to use toward them, have great confidence in their own strength, and consider as enemies those who deal faithfully with them, we can not see that confession amounts to much.

If there is true grace in the heart when a fault has been committed, it seems to us a fine time for its manifestation. Let the offender show that he is willing to bear the indignation of the Lord because he has sinned, let him manifest proper abhorrence of his fault, and proper humiliation on account of it, and few will remain unconvinced that he is a true child of God.

There is nothing degrading in confessing faults. It is degrading to commit them, and to continue impenitent for them. But for one who has committed faults to confess them with manifest sorrow and true repentance, is the most noble and elevating thing that can be done. It is a public renunciation of his faults, and profession of a purpose to avoid them in future.

Let such as confess their faults be careful to walk humbly with God. Let them feel that whatever others may do, it becomes them to be watchful and prayerful and diligent. If they wholly consecrate themselves to God, and pursue a course of unswerving fidelity in his service, they will enjoy his presence, and commend themselves to the consciences of their fellow men.

DUTIES OF CHURCH-MEMBERS TO EACH OTHER AND TO  
THE CHURCH.

THE church militant is composed of all regenerate persons—all true believers. They are the body of Christ, because his Spirit dwells in them and controls them. A local church is composed of such professed believers as unite together in the public worship of God. Into this body are received such as in the judgment of charity give evidence of being Christians. This organization is formed for the edification of believers and for the conversion of the impenitent. No institution is so important as the Church of God. It is a matter of gratitude that God has instituted the church, and that we are permitted to be members of it. But privileges always impose duties. And I design here to present some of the duties of church-members.

1. It is the duty of all to desire the prosperity of the church of which they are members. So did David. He prayed, "Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion; build thou the walls of Jerusalem." Indifference to the welfare of the church is a sin. We should prefer Jerusalem above our chief joy. To cherish the feeling that the prosperity of the church does not depend upon us is, wrong. The state of the church is the state of the Christians who compose it. If each member of a church is what he should be, then will the church be in a prosperous state.

2. It is the duty of the members of the church to



exercise and cultivate love one to another. 1 Pet. 1 : 22—"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently." John, 13 : 34—"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another ; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." Members of the same church should recognize each other as fellow members. They should seek an acquaintance with each other. They should visit each other on the basis of this relation. They should converse and consult together and sympathize with each other. If Christians of the same church were better acquainted with each other, they would love each other more, and more readily co-operate together. Let your acquaintance be as extensive as possible, and without discrimination, with such as belong to the same church with you.

Members of the same church ought to exercise a care and watch over each other. This implies, in the first place, that they ought to strive to promote each other's advancement in the attainments, duties, and comforts of religion. Col. 3 : 16. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom ; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." 1 Thes. 5 : 11—"Wherefore, comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do." Heb. 3 : 13—"Exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day,

lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."

Christians ought to exhort each other to constancy, fidelity, and perseverance in all Christian duty. They should speak often one to another, to encourage, admonish, and edify one another. They should endeavor to bring forward such as are halting and negligent in duty. This duty, though lamentably neglected, is just as binding as the duty of public worship, just as binding as any duty can be, because it is enforced by the command of God.

Another part of the watch and care which members of the same church are under obligation to extend to each other, consists in reclaiming such as have fallen into error and sin. Gal. 6 : 1, 2—"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." James 5 : 19, 20—"Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." If your fellow member falls into sin, or error, or any thing detrimental or ruinous to his soul, in the spirit of love and meekness labor with him that he may be brought back to right views and feelings and to the enjoyment of peace and safety again.

Another duty of a member of a church is to meet with his fellow members to worship God and to co-oper-

ate with them in efforts to do good. Heb. 10 : 25—“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is.” Neglecters of public worship are a detriment to a church, and unworthy of a name and a place as members of it.

It is the duty of members of the church to seek the peace and unity of the church. This they are to do by exercising love and a forbearing, yielding, and self-sacrificing spirit. Every thing but truth and principle is to be sacrificed to the peace and unity of the church. Eph. 4 : 1, 2, 3—“I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called ; with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love ; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” “Be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love ; in honor preferring one another.” 1 Cor. 1 : 10—“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no division among you ; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment.” Rom. 15 : 1, 2, 3—“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself.” Those who wilfully pursue a course of conduct which has a tendency to promote divisions are greatly in the wrong. They set their own gratification above the interests of the church. Rom. 16 : 17—“Now I beseech you, breth-

ren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." To promote union, it is enjoined upon the members of a church not to speak evil one of another. Eph. 4:21—"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice." Gal. 5:15—"But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another." Evil speaking should always be avoided. It is especially unbecoming and mischievous in the members of the same church toward each other.

It is the duty of church-members to pray for one another. James, 5:16—"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed." Each member of the church should pray for all the other members. Thus will each member enjoy the prayers of the whole church.

It is the duty of each member of a church to bear his proportion of the necessary expenses of the church in sustaining the means of grace. This he is to do, as a debt which he owes, and not as a charity which he may bestow. It is unjust that others should bear all the expenses of the institutions of religion while he shares with them their benefits.

Church relationship affords a great opportunity for usefulness. The Christian who makes full proof of his ministry as a member of a church can not fail to do good. Such a member will not only grow in grace, but will do much to promote growth among his

brethren, and to give efficiency to the church. Christians are too generally deficient in their duties as members of the church. In consequence of this, the churches are, for the most part, like regiments of undisciplined troops. They are unfit for real service. Instead of leading on against the foe, ministers have to spend much of their time in getting them into a condition for action.

If you are a member of a church, be careful that you be not a dead weight upon it. Strive to add to the moral strength and efficiency of the church. Do not let it be necessary for your brethren always to make exertion in order to your being at your post. So discharge your duties that you can consistently exhort your brethren to fidelity as members of the church of Christ. When Christians shall generally fulfill their obligations in this respect, then will the church be the salt of the earth. Then will she arise and shine, her light being come, and the glory of the Lord being risen upon her. Then will the strength of ministers, now exhausted in efforts to bring members of the church to their duty, be expended in labors for the conversion of impenitent men.

## PART II.

### PRAYER.

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE FACT THAT GOD IS A PRAYER-HEARING GOD AND THE CONVERSION OF THE WORLD.

“O THOU that hearest prayer! unto thee shall all flesh come.”

There is a connection between the fact that the God of the Bible hears prayer, and the conversion of the world to him.

1. The fact that God is a prayer-hearing God shows that the God of the Bible is the true God, that the religion which the Bible reveals is from the skies. The tendency of this will be to lead all men to believe in the reality of religion, and call upon Israel's God. When men are convinced that God hears prayer, when they see answers to prayer, it leads them to acknowledge him and call upon his name. This was the argument that Elijah used to convince the people who were worshipping Baal, that the God of the Bible was the true God, and that men ought to call upon his name and worship him alone.

“Then said Elijah unto all the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the Lord, and Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. Let them therefore give us two bullocks, and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under; and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under; and

call ye upon the name of your god, and I will call upon the name of the Lord, and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And the people answered and said, It is well spoken." With great earnestness and perseverance did the prophets of Baal call upon him till the going down of the sun, and no answer was given.

"And it came to pass, at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art a God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord, and that thou hast turned their heart back again. Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when the people saw it, they fell on their faces, and said, The Lord, he is the God! the Lord, he is the God!" And so, when men witness answers to prayer, in Christians being filled with love and the Holy Ghost, in their being supported in sickness and triumphing over death, and in sinners being convicted and converted, they are constrained to acknowledge, "The Lord, he is the God! the Lord, he is the God!" Men may resist all argument, but God may answer prayer in quickening his people and in moving upon the minds of their neighbors and friends in such a manner as to constrain them to acknowledge both the reality and the blessedness of religion.

2. It is evident that all men will come unto God, because he is a God that heareth prayer, from the blessings secured in answer to prayer. The great agent who brings men to God is the Holy Spirit. In answer to prayer God sends down the Spirit, which reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. It was the Holy Spirit procured in answer to prayer, which led the three thousand on the day of Pentecost to cry out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" They came to God. That Spirit still descends in answer to prayer.

3. Another consideration showing the connection between God's hearing prayer and all flesh coming to him, is that prayer is the means by which the graces of Christians are kept alive.

"Restraining prayer, we cease to fight;  
Prayer makes the Christian's armor bright;  
And Satan trembles when he sees  
The weakest saint upon his knees."

When Christians are pervaded with the spirit of prayer, they can not assemble to pray without producing a deep impression, for God is in the midst of them. When Christians pray as they should, eternal things are realized. They feel for the glory of God, and go forth to efforts to lead lost men to behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world.

It is a matter of fact that men come to God because he hears prayer. In the revivals which have pervaded our land of late years, this fact has been wonderfully



illustrated. Men have assembled together to pray. It was reported that God was in the midst of them, and whole communities of impenitent men have been moved as the trees of the forest bow before the mighty wind, and hundreds of thousands have been converted to God. So will it ever be. Let the people of God be together for prayer as they should, and sinners will flock to Christ even as clouds, and as doves to their windows.

This connection of prayer with the advancement of religion should be understood and felt. If there is prayer such as there should be, there will be every thing else necessary to roll on the kingdom of Christ. On the other hand, where there is not prayer there is no spiritual life, and those associated together make no progress in the work of saving men. Whatever else is done, if there is not prayer, there will be no movement among the dry bones of the valley. You may have all the machinery, so to speak, for the advancement of religion, but as well might you take your seat in the cars and expect to move along without an engine attached, as to expect any machinery to be efficient without prayer, and any farther than there is prayer. It is exceedingly desirable that Christians all over the world stir themselves up to call upon God, that they pray in the closet and in the family, and assemble themselves together for prayer before the God of Israel. If they pray as they should, the world will begin to move toward God. When the church universally shall travail in prayer, all flesh will flock unto him.

## PRAYER DESIGNED TO MOVE THE HEART OF GOD.

THE petition of the widow to the unjust judge was designed to move him to extend mercy to her, and it accomplished that object. The design of our petitions to God is to move him to show mercy to us, and we should expect to accomplish that object by our prayers. Prayer offered up with a proper state of heart, and accompanied with proper exertions, will prevail with God. The Lord said unto Jacob, "As a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed."

God has so ordered the kingdoms of nature, providence and grace, as to make prayer an antecedent to blessings, a cause tending to secure them as truly as tilling the earth and sowing the seed is an antecedent to a harvest, a cause of securing it.

"Prayer without any expectation that God will hear and answer, is not prayer; it wants an essential element of prayer, and deserves not the name."

That prayer is designed to move God to bestow blessings, is evident from the fact that holy men, inspired men, so understood it, so employed it. A single instance is sufficient proof of this point. Take, as illustrating the whole, the following prayer of Daniel:

"Now, therefore, O my God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate for the Lord's sake. O my God, incline thine ear and hear, open thine eyes and behold our desolations and the city that is called by thy name, for we do not present our suppli-

cations before thee for our righteousness, but for thy great mercies.”

To suppose that Daniel offered this prayer simply for the effect it would produce upon his own mind, or without the expectation of moving God to grant favors, is absurd.

Besides, God has distinctly taught us that prayer enters into his plan as antecedent to the blessings which he designs to bestow, in such a sense that without prayer they will not be experienced. Speaking to the Jews through Ezekiel, he promises to do great things for them. “I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean. From all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and will give you a heart of flesh.” Enumerating a variety of other blessings which he would confer, he then speaks thus: “Then the heathen that are round about you shall know that I the Lord build the ruined places, and plant that which was desolate. I the Lord have spoken it, and I will do it. Thus saith the Lord, I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them.”

Prayer then is introduced into God’s plan as an antecedent to the blessings which God designs to bestow. He has pledged himself to carry out this plan. “Ask, and ye shall receive.” By the manner in which he

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explains unanswered prayers, he teaches us that he does carry it out. "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss." Oh, then, pray with the expectation of answering blessings. Pray pervaded with the feeling that if answering blessings do not descend, it is not because God does not hear prayer, but because you do not abide in Christ, do not pray as you should. Never let go of the truth that by the Great Ruler of all things prayer is an established and certain means of securing heavenly blessings. For without the influence of this truth there is no prayer, and no motive to bring the heart into that state before God which is essential to effectual prayer.

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#### PRAYER PREVAILS WITH GOD.

THE experience of believers proves that prayer prevails with God.

Elijah the prophet mourned over the desolations of Israel; and when he saw that no other means would prevent a perpetual going away into idolatry, he prayed that the judgments of God might fall upon a guilty nation. He prayed that it might not rain, and God shut up the windows of heaven for the space of three years and six months. When Elijah saw that it was time to relent, he went up into the mountain and bowed down before God, and prayed that it might rain. While he was praying he sent his servant to see if there was any appearance of rain. When he reported that there was no appearance of rain, he told him to go again seven

times. "And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. And it came to pass, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain."

Take another example. "They of the Amalekites and Moab and Mount Seir combined against the Jews, to destroy them with a great army. But they awoke in the morning, and one hundred and eighty thousand of them were dead corpses. What was the matter? Why, one man had gone out against them, armed with prayer!"

"In a certain town in New York, there had been no revival for many years. The church had nearly run out, and desolation reigned unbroken. There was in a certain part of the town an aged man, a blacksmith. On one Friday he was at work in his shop alone. His mind became greatly exercised about the state of the church and the impenitent. His agony became so great that he was induced to lay aside his work, lock up his shop, and spend the afternoon in prayer. He felt that he had prevailed, and on the Sabbath called upon his minister and asked him to appoint a conference meeting. After some hesitation, he consented. When evening came, more assembled than could be accommodated in the house where the meeting was appointed. All was silent for a while, until one sinner broke out in tears, and said if any one could pray he begged him to pray for him. Another followed, and still another, until it was found that persons from every

part of the town were under deep conviction. And what was remarkable, was that they dated their conviction at the hour when this man was praying in his shop."

"The revival which began at Enfield, Mass., on the 8th of July, 1741, under a sermon preached by the elder President Edwards, on the words, "Their feet shall slide in due time," has long been considered as one of the most powerful on record. The impression of eternal things was awful and overwhelming. Many knowing nothing of the history of that work are surprised at so great effects from one sermon. But the fact is, some Christians in that vicinity had become alarmed lest God should in anger pass by that church, and had spent the whole of the preceding night in prayer."

Whenever the church has betaken herself to prayer, the windows of heaven have been opened, and spiritual blessings have descended. God has not said unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain. As soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children. Those destitute of spiritual influences may easily understand the reason. "Ye have not, because ye ask not." The individual who should solemnly resolve to try the best and last possible efficacy of prayer, and unalterably determine that heaven should not withhold a single influence which the utmost efficacy of persevering prayer could bring down, would probably find himself a much more successful agent in his little sphere.

CONSISTENT PRAYER FOR THE COMING OF CHRIST'S  
KINGDOM.

THERE can be no doubt in the Christian's mind that it is a duty to pray "Thy kingdom come." His regard to the glory of God, his feelings of love to man, would prompt this prayer. But to be acceptable to God, this prayer must be consistent. He who offers it must use his influence, his property, and his personal labors, to secure this object. Consistent prayer for any object implies the use of all appropriate means for its accomplishment. If your child was sick, you would nurse it in the best manner, employ the best medical skill, and then call upon God to raise it to health. And if self-denial, personal effort, and funds are required that the kingdom of Christ may be extended through the earth, they must be contributed by those who would consistently pray "Thy kingdom come." It was thus that Paul and Martyn and Judson offered this prayer. "Said a good man now gone to his reward, 'I have almost lost my interest in the monthly concert for prayer.' I expressed surprise, and asked the reason. He replied, 'Our minister has done asking us to contribute to the missionary cause, and I can not pray unless I give; it seems like mocking God to pray for the conversion of the world, and not send the Gospel to the destitute.' Here is good sense, as well as consistent piety. How shall they believe on Him of whom they have not heard? To pray without effort is presumption. To labor without prayer is atheism. We must pray and

labor, and labor and pray. Dear brother, are you one of those who, having the ability, never contribute any thing, or give almost nothing, to sustain home and foreign missions, and send Bibles and tracts and religious books to the millions who are perishing without the means of grace?" Then what will avail your prayer for the coming of Christ's Kingdom? If the desire for an object is to be measured by our efforts to obtain it, there can be no heart in such prayers, and

"God abhors the sacrifice,  
Where not the heart is found."

Let the people of God labor and give as they should; and they will see the kingdom of God advancing, in answer to prayer.

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#### BELIEVING PRAYER.

"What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."—Mark 11 : 24.

WE must exercise faith when we pray. It is on this condition that we receive answers to our prayers.

Faith in prayer is taking for reality those representations which God has made of his willingness and purpose to hear and answer the prayers of his people, on the conditions set forth in his word.

It implies uprightness of heart. We must have desires agreeable to the will of God. What we desire must be for the honor of God and for our own spiritual good. If we willfully and habitually practice what we know to be contrary to the will of God, then we can



not expect to be heard of Him. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. In heart we must be conformed to God's will, in order to pray in faith.

Faith in prayer implies submission to God's will in reference to the things for which we pray. In answer to the prayers of his people, God bestows either the thing which they ask, or something better for them. Faith leads us to rejoice in the infinite wisdom of God, and to leave our case cheerfully at his disposal.

Faith in prayer implies that we rely wholly on the intercession of Christ to give prevalence to our prayers. It implies that for Christ's sake God may bestow every blessing on his children who pray. "If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it."

Faith in prayer implies that we, conscious of praying with the qualifications already mentioned, expect answers to our prayers; that when we pray we believe that we receive the things which we ask, and that we look for them. If we come to God with a doubting mind, expecting no answers to our prayers, we can not expect to receive any thing of him.

Faith in prayer implies a disposition to continue in prayer till the blessing is granted to us. "It is not enough to begin to pray, nor to pray right; nor is it enough to continue a time to pray; we must patiently and believingly continue in prayer until we obtain an answer. And further, we are not only to continue in prayer unto the end, but we are to believe that God does hear us and will answer our prayer. Most fre-

quently we fail in not continuing in prayer until the blessing is obtained, and in not expecting the blessing." If the answer to prayer is not immediately received, wait for it. Either you are not fully prepared to receive it, or that juncture of affairs in which its bestowment would be most for the glory of God and the good of his people has not arrived. Therefore, continue to wait on the Lord.

There are cases which show, what we fear is too common, the want of this faith in the people of God. Peter was taken by Herod and cast into prison. Prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him. But when he was reported to be at the gate of the house where many were gathered together praying, they did not believe it. And when they went and saw him for themselves they were astonished. So it is often the case that Christians pray for a blessing, but they do not expect an answer; and when they see that the blessing has been granted they are astonished. But Christians of such little faith live far beneath their privilege; they might know far more than they do of God's willingness to hear and answer the prayers of his people. But there are cases in which this faith is beautifully illustrated:

"A widowed mother who walked with God had an only son, the son of her vows and prayers. He entered college, and graduated moral and lovely, but without repentance. She ordered his furniture to a room in an adjacent theological seminary, saying he was going to enter it at the opening of the next session. She was

supposed by some to be unduly excited, and they sought to dissuade her from her purpose. But the furniture was sent as she desired, and the son went home. In a very short time a blessed revival commenced in the church of which she was a member. Her son was among the first converts. He became a communicant of the church, and entered the seminary at the appointed time."

"At a weekly prayer-meeting in ———, an aged, wealthy, and influential man entered, who, during a long life, had been seemingly indifferent to his spiritual welfare, and, to the surprise of all present, he rose under deep emotion, and asked the prayers of God's people for his own conversion. The next week he was again among them, apparently a penitent at the foot of the Cross.

"As the intelligence of his hopeful conversion spread next day in the congregation, it reached an infirm and aged Christian, who had for years been confined to his house, and was daily waiting for his summons to depart. On hearing it he insisted on being carried to see the wealthy man, and would entrust his message to no one. After a long interview he returned home rejoicing.

"The cause of the infirm man's visit was perhaps known only to himself and his venerable pastor. Thirty years ago, as he was burning coal on the mountain side, two of his neighbors visited his little shanty, found him engaged in reading His Bible and prayer, and joined him in his devotions. Ere they separated they

agreed to meet him again the next week on the mountain to pray, as did the Saviour; and from week to week they met in this quiet retreat, which proved indeed a Bethel. One evening they spoke of their wealthy neighbor, mourning that he was living for this world only, when he was so much needed in the Church of Christ; and they at last entered into a written, secret covenant with each other, before God, not to cease praying for his conversion until he should be brought in, or die, or they should all be called to their final account. Years of prayer passed on, during which their faith failed not. One of the suppliants was at length called home, then another; and the coal burner, though left alone, yet persevered. Thirty years had passed when the above news reached him, his visit was made, and he came out of the house of his wealthy neighbor, saying, "Now, Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

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#### THE DUTY OF SECRET PRAYER.

1. SECRET prayer is specifically enjoined. The Saviour says, "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door pray to thy Father who is in secret." Here is an express command to enter into the closet and pray when thou hast shut the door. When we have an express command for any thing, we can not substitute our obedience to another command for obedience to that. Therefore praying in

the family, or in public, is not obedience to the command to pray in secret.

It is just as much a violation of the command of God, to neglect secret prayer, as it is to break the Sabbath or profane the name of God. They who neglect to worship God in secret prayer, shew a want of principle in all their worship of God, a want of regard to divine authority in respect to the manner of his worship. How can we worship God acceptably, when we neglect a specific command in reference to the manner of his worship? We can not. We need expect no communications of his favor in all our attempts to worship him while we continue in the neglect of secret prayer. To the neglecters of secret prayer, such language as the following seems applicable: "Return unto the Lord, and he will return unto you." When you come back to the closet you will find God ready to heal all your backslidings, and to lift up the light of his countenance upon you.

2. Secret prayer is a duty, because it qualifies us for other duties, and thus renders us more efficient in the service of God. The person who is faithful in the discharge of this duty will have a heart for other duties, and will generally be found faithful in the discharge of them. What is done in the closet, measures what will be done out of it. Secret prayer is the great preparative for the discharge of all Christian duties, and for a life of eminent piety and usefulness. It is the great barrier against the influences of the present world. It is the great promoter of personal piety. All those who

have made high attainments in piety, who have been eminently holy and useful in the church, have been distinguished for secret prayer. This was the source of their high attainments and of their successful efforts. Luther, Calvin, Edwards, Payson and Page were all distinguished for attendance upon secret prayer. Whitefield says "Whole days and weeks have I spent prostrate on the ground, in silent or vocal prayer." Spencer never went out to make effort for the salvation of souls, only from the closet. These men attained high degrees of piety and usefulness.

We get a preparation for other duties in the closet, and we can perform no duty as we should, without the proper preparation. If secret prayer, then, qualifies us for the discharge of other duties, and no other duty can be performed acceptably without it, for want of that preparation which secret prayer gives, our obligation to attend to it is involved in our obligation in reference to every other duty. It is a fundamental duty, without the discharge of which nothing can be done acceptably to God for want of preparation. It is the great and strong hold of individuals and churches. If they pray much in their closets they will be benefited by reading the word of God, by religious conversation, and by the privileges of God's house. They will be ready to speak to others upon the great things of religion. They will be ready for every good word and work.

3. While the performance of this duty is connected with growth in grace, and usefulness, the neglect of it is connected with opposite consequences. Those who

neglect their closets go backward, and not forward. The best that can be looked for or hoped for from such, is a low state of piety, indifference and unfruitfulness, and spiritual darkness and death. For a man to attempt to live a spiritual life without prayer, is like one attempting to lead a natural life without food or rest. Let either be neglected, and by no other expedient, by no temporary excitements, can he avoid that weakness and languor that must end in utter inability. Never has a case of backsliding and apostacy been discovered, to my knowledge, which has not been connected with the neglect of the duty of secret prayer. Hundreds have neglected secret prayer, and got far away from God in all cases, and in many brought reproach upon his cause as the consequence.

While, then, secret prayer is so essential to our maintaining a holy walk, and carrying forward the service of God, while without it we are sure to be like the salt which has lost its savor, can we neglect it without a high degree of guilt? O, had we attended to this duty as we should, how different would have been our past lives! what different results would have been connected with our efforts for the glory of God and the good of mankind! how different would be our present feelings and influence! Had we been more like Edwards, Payson and Page in this duty, we might have had more of the faith and the zeal and the influence for good which so eminently attached to them.

## RULES FOR THE CLOSET.

THE benefit to be derived from a duty depends very much upon the manner in which it is performed. This is emphatically true of secret prayer. Good habits in reference to this duty are invaluable.

1. We should accompany secret prayer with reading of the Scriptures and with self-examination. The word of God is adapted to impress our minds with a sense of His being, and of the relations we sustain to him. It aids our thoughts and encourages our hearts in prayer. And self-examination impresses us with a sense of our unworthiness and of our need of divine direction and support.

2. Secret prayer should be frequent. David speaks of praying seven times a-day. Again he says, "As for me I will call upon God, and the Lord shall save me. Evening and morning and at noon will I pray and cry aloud, and he shall hear my voice." Daniel habitually prayed in secret three times a-day. "Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house, and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a-day and prayed and gave thanks before his God as he did aforetime." All would find it profitable to follow the example of Daniel in this respect. Twice a-day is the least that will keep the Christian graces alive. Morning and evening should be stated times sacred to the performance of this duty as a regular thing. All should visit the closet, morning and evening, who would live a



Christian life. They who would be eminently holy must oft retire for meditation and secret communion with God.

3. Be punctual in the discharge of this duty. It must have its appointed times as much as any duty of life. If it do not it will lose much of its effect, and be liable to be crowded out by other cares and duties. Good habits can not be gained in reference to this duty unless we have our regular times for it. It is often neglected for want of proper arrangements in this respect, and, when not neglected, performed in a hurried manner, which renders it of little advantage. The first hour in the morning, when it can be commanded, and an early hour in the evening, should be devoted to this duty. If we get the spirit of prayer in the morning, we carry it with us through the day. And at an early hour in the evening the mind is free from that weariness which unfits it for devotion.

4. The duty of secret prayer should be performed thoroughly. We had better be slack and superficial about any thing else than the duties of the closet. Never leave your closet without a blessing. You need not do it. If you perform this duty faithfully, the blessing of God will be bestowed upon you to fill you with might in the inner man, and with joy in the Saviour. If you visit your closet as you should, you will meet God there, and you will come forth as Moses came down from the mount, with you face shining as the face of an angel.

5. Have a place for retirement. It is to be feared that many perform this duty in an irregular and super-

ficial manner, for want of a suitable place for retirement. Families who are able, ought to provide rooms where any with them, or of them, could have a place for retirement, comfortable at all seasons. But if you have to go up into the mountain, as Christ did, or upon the hay, as others have done, have a place decided upon, consecrated to secret prayer. Morning and evening, then, retire to your closets. Be punctual. Have your hours consecrated to this duty, and be faithful always in the performance of it. Then shall your strength be renewed day by day ; then shall light beam upon your path, and it shall be onward and upward.

"Prayer makes the darkened cloud withdraw,  
Prayer climbs the ladder Jacob saw,  
Gives exercise to faith and love,  
Brings every blessing from above."

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#### EXCUSES FOR NEGLECTING THE CLOSET.

To multitudes the closet is a delightful place. They prize the privilege of retiring by themselves to converse with God. They spontaneously break out in the language of the Psalm :

Lord, in the morning thou shalt hear  
My voice ascending high ;  
To thee will I direct my prayer,  
To thee lift up mine eye."

Or in the language of that beautiful hymn so often sung :

"I love to steal awhile away  
From every cumbering care,  
And spend the hours of setting day  
In humble, grateful prayer.

"I love in solitude to shed  
The penitential tear,  
And all his promises to plead  
Where none but God can hear."

But there are some who excuse themselves. They say, "We have not time to attend to this duty."

Then you have not time to obey and enjoy God. How can you better spend your time than in the manner in which God appoints? Are you a professed follower of Christ, you should have thought of this before you made your vows to God. You have covenanted to walk with God, and now it is too late to say you have not time to do what he requires you to do.

But you have time to attend to this duty. God has required of you nothing for which he has not given sufficient time. No other duty will suffer by discharging this, but every other duty will suffer by neglecting the closet, because every other duty needs the preparation there obtained. When secret prayer is neglected, the mind will be dark and unhappy. It will not have that clearness and cheerfulness necessary for the various duties which devolve upon it. You will be vigorous and active after the duties of the closet, and more will be performed during the day than if you neglected them. However business presses upon you, secret prayer will not hinder its accomplishment. I have known students so hurried as to neglect secret prayer in the morning, but they have invariably testified that they have accomplished but little on those days. Said a pious minister, "If I neglect secret prayer in the

morning, I am sure to have a lost day as the consequence." Never was any thing gained by taking the time God requires for devotional purposes, for something else. The least time will be consumed by doing every thing as God requires.

And what are temporal compared with spiritual interests? What is the body compared with the soul? If it were necessary, we should seek the salvation of the soul at the loss of all things. How much more inexcusable are we then, for neglecting the care of the soul when we have the assurance that if we seek first the kingdom of heaven and the righteousness thereof, all other things shall be added.

No one ever regretted giving faithful attention to the duty of secret prayer. All who have any sense of the value of Christian attainment and happiness, only regret that they allow the world at times to intrude upon them in the closet, and at times to prevent their visiting the closet. Every thing goes best with those who are constant and faithful in the closet. The best way to secure every blessing is to please God.

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#### THE REWARD OF SECRET PRAYER.

THERE is a reward promised to secret prayer. And it is an open reward. "He shall reward thee openly." It will be something visible. It will be seen in the graces secured by it. It helps to a consistent, happy, holy walk. The light of that Christian who is faithful in his closet, shines. His humble, holy walk is seen ;

his influence is felt ; he is saved from the many inconsistencies which spoil Christian character and influence ; his piety is constant, vigorous and bright. The church and the world will feel that he is a holy man, that he walks with God. Thus God openly rewards those who pray in secret, by giving them an established and an acknowledged character of piety, by making them the medium through which the truth and power of religion shine out most brilliantly and convincingly to the glory of God and the praise of his grace in Christ Jesus.

God rewards openly those who pray in secret, by making them in a high degree useful. They are prepared to exert an influence by the conviction produced upon the minds of all of the reality and sincerity of their piety. They have a spirit of prayer and zeal by the grace imparted to them in the closet. Where they go, a holy influence for good is felt, the standard of piety in the church is elevated, and the minds of Christians are stirred up to renewed diligence and prayer. These praying men and women are the pillars of the church. God blesses their labors in the edification and comfort of his people, and in the salvation of souls. Where there is a church of such Christians, their influence will be mighty ; the cause of God will be promoted, and great good will be accomplished through their instrumentality. Be sure that Christian and that church who are faithful in visiting the closet, will not remain unfruitful. God will make them the honored instruments of promoting his kingdom. Happy for the

world to have such Christians and such churches. Oh, what would be accomplished by a church, all of whose members should be faithful in the performance of this duty!

“It was the grace which she obtained in the closet that enabled Mary Lyon to persevere in founding Holyoke Seminary. From its commencement until her death, a special revival of religion occurred in it every year. The secret of those wonderful revivals was never understood till after her death, when they were found in almost every instance to have been preceded by special seasons of persevering secret prayer.”

God will reward openly those who pray in secret, at the day of judgment and in the world of retribution. At that day when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed, it will be seen what effects have been produced by secret prayer on individuals, families, churches, and the world. Then those who have been faithful in the discharge of this duty, will doubtless have hundreds brought forth who were saved in answer to those prayers offered up when no eye but the eye of God could see them. These souls shall shine like gems in the crown of their rejoicing for ever and ever. These Aarons and Hurs and these praying Hannahs shall shine like stars for ever and ever in the kingdom of God. The whole universe shall see the wonderful effects which have followed their prayers, and all holy beings shall witness their exaltation on account of them, in the glories of heaven.

The closet is the scene where the most important

events are brought about which concern the glory of God and the souls of men. Dear brethren, what is the history of your closets? It is a history more important than that of empires, to be brought into review at the judgment of the great day. Who can say that the past in this respect has been as it should be? Has not the closet oft been neglected, its duties performed without preparation, in a hurried manner? Oh, let the future be better in this respect. If for the time being you dismiss the world and take the time you need, you will find your closets as the house of God, the gate of heaven, and glorious rewards will be openly bestowed upon you by Him who seeth in secret.

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#### AN ADDRESS TO THE IMPENITENT ON SECRET PRAYER.

To those who have no hope that they have passed from death unto life, let me say, the duty of secret prayer is as much binding upon you as upon any. You need, too, the help of God, which may be secured by secret prayer. Oh, how can you stay away from the closet, where God meets poor sinners, to bless them with his salvation? The hour is hastening on in which you will feel that you need the help of God. Will you, then, longer cast off fear and restrain prayer before God? He permits you to come to him in the closet, but you never visit the closet. He commands you to pray in secret, but hitherto you have cast off fear and restrained prayer. Morning and evening have come and gone, but you have not retired to hold communion

with God. What must be your feelings when you think of a prayerless life? What prospects must be before you, if you live on thus forgetful of God? Oh, repent! Begin to pray. Let it be said of you, as of Saul of Tarsus, "Behold, he prayeth."

No finite being can estimate the results which might follow a sinner's commencing to pray in secret. A lady once heard a discourse upon the duty of secret prayer. Before she left the church, she resolved that she would commence secret prayer, and endeavor to perform the duty as the servant of God directed. Soon she became distressed in mind, and said to an acquaintance, "I wish I could see the man who preached that sermon on secret prayer, for I have tried to follow his directions, and yet have not found my Saviour." But as soon as she went burdened to her closet, the Saviour spoke peace to her soul. Her conversion was the means of a powerful revival of religion, in which her husband, her son and her daughter were converted and brought into the church with her.

To such as are distressed on account of sin, let me say that the closet is the best place to find relief. O, go there, burdened sinner, and spread out your whole case before God. Own your sins; make known fully your feelings and purposes, and, in the name of Jesus, plead for the mercy you need.

"Trace back the religious experience of almost any Christian to its beginning, and will you not find that beginning in the closet? Until a certain period, he was thoughtless, worldly, and, it may be, openly wick-



ed. But in God's time, some affecting appeal of divine truth or divine providence reached his heart. He began to think, and his thoughts troubled him. He could no longer disguise from himself that, being in a sinful, he was in a dangerous, state. There is a process of conviction now going on in his mind. We see, indeed, no outward manifestation of it. The movement is inward, silent and unknown, except to Him who seeth in secret. But with Him, who is now felt to be the only helper, there is communication. This burdened, unhappy man, enters his closet, whatever or wherever it may be. The door is shut. All is still and silent as it respects the outer world. But that stillness and that silence are soon broken by the heaving sigh, the trembling approach to the mercy seat, and the broken accents of prayer. There comes, too, as with "a still, small voice," the answering Spirit, producing the penitent heart, and final consecration to God. This is the beginning of that new life which, receiving future supplies at the same prolific fountain, grows and expands on earth, and is consummated in heaven. To him who is convinced of his guilt, then, one thing is now needful. It is that he come before God, against whom he has sinned, and acknowledge all this to him. It will not do that a man know it all, and feel it all, and keep it all within his own bosom. Religion is not a series of emotions, shut up within ourselves; it is a transaction between ourselves and God. The man has sinned against God, and he must, as an individual sinner, be reconciled to God. It is just as much a trans-

action between himself and God, as though he and his Maker were the only beings in existence. The prodigal son was first convicted of his wretchedness, but this did not help him. He resolved to arise and go to his father. This did not bring about his reconciliation. He arose and went to his father. This was the point on which his destiny was suspended. When he arose and went, and not till then, his father had compassion; 'and when he was yet a great way off, ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.' "

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#### FAMILY PRAYER.

"Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the families that call not on thy name."—Jer. 10 : 25.

THIS is an imprecation; but what is imprecated by an inspired person is denounced by the God who inspires him. "Dismal clouds of wrath hang over such families, that will be discharged in terrible, destructive storms."

The dependence of families upon God is a reason why the family altar should be erected. Families have wants, as well as individuals. Our Saviour taught his disciples to pray in secret; but he left them a formula for family prayer. How suitable that families should acknowledge God's goodness in their preservation and daily mercies! How important that they should seek his blessing in all their interests, and implore his help in times of trouble!

The family is the most important institution among

men. The influences there exerted are the most potent. The principles there imbibed, and the habits there formed are the most lasting. No duties, then, are more important than those which grow out of the family relation. Reason, then, would dictate that prayer should daily ascend to God from the family circle.

From the very design and effect of prayer, it is incumbent on parents to attend to family prayer. Prayer is designed to prevail with God to bestow blessings. And the richest blessings have been secured in answer to prayer. Would not, then, that benevolence which heads of families should exercise towards the family circle lead them to call upon God in their households? No believer in religion can doubt but that the worship of God in the family would be beneficial. But to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

It is practicable for every family to have a family altar. One of the first things which Abraham did on going from one place to another was, to set up such an altar. His example should be followed. Every head of a family should say to those composing it, Come, let us worship, and bow down before the Lord our Maker. There is no one who can not, in some way, maintain family worship. If a parent feels incompetent to offer extemporaneous prayer in his family, he can with them read a portion of God's word, perhaps sing a psalm of praise, and offer up a written prayer.

Family prayer is adapted to our religious wants.

There is a blessing peculiar to social worship. This blessing, which Christ promised whenever two or three are gathered together in His name, every Christian daily needs. Regard to his own spiritual good, as well as fidelity to others, should induce every parent to maintain family worship.

Most parents when they experience religion, feel it a duty to commence family prayer. And those who hope they have become Christians, and neglect this duty, generally remain in darkness. Some, by the continued neglect of this duty, go on, destitute of growth and comfort; and others, after many struggles, and a bitter experience of the consequences of neglect, take up their cross and worship God in their households. Then their times of joy and peace return. Family prayer has an important connection with other means of grace. At the family altar a blessing is sought preparatory to the services of God's house. There, too, the Holy Spirit is entreated to follow the instructions of the Sabbath. Many a sermon is blessed to the salvation of souls in answer to prayer there offered. When the revival of God's work commences in a community, who can doubt that such prayer is an important means of promoting it? In answer to such prayer the Spirit continues to descend, and impressions made upon the minds of the unconverted are deepened, and inquirers are brought into the liberty of the gospel.

By family worship, seed is sown which often springs up and bears fruit in after years. Many who have come under the influence of family worship, have

received impressions which they have carried with them into distant scenes, and which have resulted in their conversion to God.

Esteem it then your duty and privilege daily to kneel and worship the Lord with those you love. David, when the ark of God was removed, so ordered affairs that at the proper hour he was ready for family worship. He went down from the public business of the day to bless his household. Let believing parents follow his example, and blessed results may follow.

A pious tradesman conversing with a minister on family worship, related the following instructive circumstances :

“ When I began business for myself I was determined through grace to be particularly conscientious with respect to family prayer. Accordingly I persevered for many years in the delightful practice of family worship. Morning and evening every individual of my family was present, nor would I allow my apprentices to be absent on any account. In a few years the advantages of these arrangements manifestly appeared, the blessing of the upper and nether springs followed me, health and happiness attended my family, and prosperity my business. At length such was the rapid increase of my trade, and the importance of devoting every possible moment to my customers, that I began to think whether family prayer did not occupy too much of our time in the morning. Pious scruples arose respecting my intentions of relinquishing this part of my duty, but at length worldly interests pre-

vailed so far as to induce me to excuse the attendance of my apprentices ; and not long after it was deemed advisable, for the more eager prosecution of business, to make the prayer with my wife when we arose in the morning suffice for the day. Notwithstanding the repeated checks of conscience that followed this base omission, the calls of a flourishing concern, and the prospect of an increasing family, appeared so imperious and commanding that I found an easy excuse for this fatal evil, especially as I did not omit prayer altogether. My conscience was now almost seared with a hot iron, when it pleased the Lord to awaken me by a singular providence.

“ One day I received a letter from a young man who had been my apprentice for a time previous to my omitting family prayer. Not doubting but I continued domestic worship, his letter was chiefly on that subject. It was couched in the most affectionate and respectful terms, but judge of my surprise and confusion when I read these words: ‘ Oh, my dear master, never, never shall I be able sufficiently to thank you for the precious privilege with which you indulged me in your family devotions. Oh, sir, eternity will be too short to praise my God for what I learned when there. It was there I first beheld my lost and wretched state as a sinner ; it was there that I first knew the way of salvation ; and there that I first experienced the preciousness of Christ in me the hope of glory. Oh, sir, permit me to say, never, never neglect those precious engagements. You have yet a family and

more apprentices ; may your house be the birthplace of their souls !' I could read no further. Every line flashed conviction in my face. I trembled, I shuddered, and was alarmed lest the blood of my children and apprentices should be demanded at my soul-murdering hands.

" Filled with confusion, and bathed in tears, I fled for refuge in secret ; I spread the letter before God. I agonized, and—but you can better conceive than I can describe my feelings. Suffice it to say that light broke in upon my disconsolate soul, and a sense of blood-bought pardon was obtained. I immediately flew to my family, presented them before the Lord, and from that day to the present I have performed this duty, and am determined through grace that whenever my business becomes so large as to interrupt family prayer, I will give up the superfluous part of my business and retain my devotion. Better to lose a few shillings than to become the deliberate murderer of my family and of my own soul."

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#### ON TAKING PART IN THE PRAYER MEETING.

A CLERGYMAN visiting a church of his acquaintance some two years after they had enjoyed a general revival of religion, inquired of one of the members how those converted in that revival held out. He replied they seem to be generally holding fast their profession, but none of them give us any assistance in our social meetings. In this case their assistance was greatly

needed, for the social meetings of the church were in a very languishing condition. In most communities the cause of Christ suffers for want of a disposition among the members of the church to take part in the prayer meeting. There is reason therefore to urge upon young Christians to train themselves to speaking and praying, so as to be ready to take part in a conference meeting. The usefulness of Christians is very much enhanced, both at home and abroad, by the ability to lead in pertinent remarks and prayer. This ability is one of those gifts which Christians should earnestly covet.

Those not accustomed to speak or pray in public, should give utterance to their thoughts in secret prayer. They will thus become habituated to the sound of their own voices. They will also gain an ease in expressing their desires in words. This will be of great advantage to them in public prayer. Many have overcome their hesitancy in expressing themselves, and have acquired great freedom of utterance in the closet.

Where it is practicable, young Christians should hold social meetings by themselves. In this way they acquire the habit of leading in exhortation and prayer. If at the same time or before they cease thus to meet, they take part in the general conference meeting, this will be a successful means of preparing them to assist in social meetings.

A young convert who was naturally very diffident, was in the habit of going into the fields and woods to give expression to his thoughts, as if he were in a social



meeting. In this manner he so trained himself that he excelled in his performances in such meetings, and became very useful in his labors in sustaining them.

It is of service to those who lead in prayer to have some topics arranged in their minds beforehand, to which their prayers shall principally refer. This will promote freedom of thought, which is essential to ready utterance. If you have something to pray for, and ask for it in simplicity, your difficulty in leading in prayer will vanish away.

Above all other things seek to have your heart filled with love to God, and your soul impressed with eternal realities. When you rise to speak, have the cross and the judgment in view. When you kneel or stand to pray, feel that you are in the immediate presence of God. Let your thoughts be so absorbed in God as to exclude all such thoughts of fellow mortals as would disturb your feelings or hinder your utterance. I have known young Christians arise and speak and pray with great fluency in a religious meeting, who had so much natural diffidence that before they experienced religion nothing could have induced them to speak in public. In the matter of which we are speaking, to be filled with the Holy Ghost is a great help.

One thing more. In social meetings feel that you are the servants of God. When you engage in any exercises, do it as unto the Lord. Look to Him for assistance. He will give you enlargement, and work through you to promote His cause.

In many instances, professors of advanced standing and experience may do good by encouraging the diffi-

dent and inexperienced to take part in social meetings. Though many others may be more ready, still their future usefulness and the interests of religion require that they should be brought into service. Let them receive proper encouragement.

In promoting religion, good exercises in social meetings are second only to the faithful preaching of the gospel. O, how sad to see long pauses in such meetings, as if Christians had nothing to say for Christ. How sad that such meetings should lack interest and efficiency for want of numerous and different individuals to take part in them! When sinners, awakened by the Spirit of God, resort to such meetings, they are stumbled by the backwardness of Christians to exhort and pray. Many who can speak in a political or educational meeting are dumb when circumstances call for them to speak in a religious meeting. For talents kept hid in a napkin, a fearful responsibility rests upon those who profess the love of Christ. This responsibility increases as the prayer meeting becomes a more prominent instrument of saving sinners. As you would be useful in the vineyard of the Lord, and meet the approbation of your Redeemer, fail not to cultivate and employ the talents which God has bestowed upon you to give power to the prayer meeting.

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#### REASONS WHY PROFESSORS OF RELIGION SHOULD ATTEND THE PRAYER MEETING.

NEIGHBORHOOD prayer meetings in many instances have been productive of great good. They ought to

be sustained wherever there are Christians enough to do it. Those so situated as to render it impracticable for them to attend the prayer meetings of the church to which they belong, should unite with other Christians around them and sustain a neighborhood prayer meeting. Such meetings will promote their spiritual improvement, and may result in the salvation of sinners. There are times when Christians should daily meet for prayer. And wherever prayer meetings are established, Christians should feel it their privilege and duty to aid in sustaining them. The history of the Fulton street prayer meeting is cheering proof that it is not in vain for Christians to assemble daily to call upon God. In cities and large villages where Christians in goodly numbers live or do business near to each other, they may accomplish great good among themselves and in all the region about them, by daily gatherings for prayer.

But I proceed to some remarks in reference to the weekly prayer meeting, which those associated together for the public worship of God should sustain.

It is practicable for most members of a church to attend a weekly prayer meeting, where they may encourage each other, and seek the blessing of Almighty God. To suppose that any thing is lost by attending a weekly prayer meeting, is a great mistake. I once knew a church composed principally of farmers, who sustained a weekly prayer meeting held in the afternoon at two o'clock in the winter, and at four o'clock in the summer. Even in hay-time they planned their work

so as to attend that meeting. And they assured me that in nothing did their temporal affairs suffer, and that they found themselves greatly refreshed, physically, socially and spiritually, by doing so. People will find no difficulty in attending a prayer meeting if they will only arrange their business with a view of attending it. Suppose you had some important affairs away from home to attend to once a week, would you not make such arrangements as to do it? Can it be denied then that your non-attendance upon the prayer meeting betrays an inadequate sense of its importance, and a want of purpose to attend.

The prayer meeting should be attended, because Christ has promised to favor it with his presence. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." If Christ has appointed a place where he will meet his people, should they not there flock together? What feelings toward Christ must it indicate, lightly to esteem the prayer meeting?

Another reason why professors of religion should attend the prayer meeting, is; that it is a most important means of grace. It is the invariable testimony of those who habitually attend upon it, that it has a great quickening power. It brings Christians near to God, and near to one another. It enlarges their hearts to feel for others. It animates their faith and stimulates their activity in the cause of God. A growing Christian who neglects the prayer meeting is rarely to be found. And the neglect of the prayer meeting by those

who have been accustomed to attend it, is a most infallible mark of declension in religion. I have never known a Christian who, from the first dawn of hope onward, was constant in attendance upon the prayer meeting, who was not a growing Christian. On the contrary, I have never known one who habitually neglected the prayer meeting, that seemed to be making progress in the divine life. Brethren and sisters, you need the prayer meeting to help you on in the Christian race. If you would abide in Christ and be filled with his Spirit, if you would go from strength to strength in his service, attend it.

Another reason why you should attend the prayer meeting is that it has a most important connection with the prosperity of religion. It is disheartening to those who do attend, to miss their brethren and sisters. Every one who attends encourages the others who are present, and increases the interest of the meeting. Suppose, as it was in the apostles' days, you should see the church all gathered of one accord to call upon God, would you not feel that it was in a state of great spiritual prosperity and happiness? Would you then contribute your part toward the prosperity of the church, attend the prayer meeting, and do what you can to render it efficient. What would you think if a church that was able should neglect to provide itself with a place of public worship and the ministry of the word? But what will all the arrangements for public worship, all the labors put forth by the ministry, avail, unless the people of God meet together for prayer? Listen to

the voice of Scripture: "I will be inquired of by the house of Israel to do these things for them." Listen to the voice of experience: "From all those regions where the people of God generally neglect the assembling of themselves together for prayer, there comes up from the shepherds of Israel the complaint, Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" Would you, then, be one to render the church efficient in the work of converting the world, the preaching of the word instrumental of the salvation of men, attend the prayer meeting, and put forth your influence and exertions to have others attend it.

God is honored by the united prayers of his people. When they all assemble for prayer, then is he inquired of by the house of Israel. The united prayers of God's people are their united testimony to the evil of sin and the importance of holiness. God is honored by the faith of the church in His promises to prayer. The Holy Spirit is honored by the united testimony of the church to the necessity and importance of His agency. Besides, a prayer meeting generally attended by the church is a witness to the world of the importance of religion.

Prayer meetings tend to bring Christians together in feeling and sympathy, and thus prepare them to co-operate in efforts to build up Zion. Nothing tends more to promote in the church the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace, than the assembling of its members for prayer.

No Christian can attain to his highest usefulness and happiness who neglects the prayer meeting. No Christian who is regular in his attendance upon it will fail to be esteemed by praying sculs, and to contribute something to the prosperity of Zion.

In no way can the church more effectually stay up the hands of their minister than by attending the appointed meetings for prayer. He knows that it will not be in vain for him to preach if Christians generally resort to the prayer meeting. And he feels that he has but little encouragement to hope for success where but few of the church meet to pray.

That the church, through the instrumentality which she employs, may become mighty in reforming the world, that more abundantly she may witness the triumphs of grace, a great reform in reference to sustaining meetings for prayer is requisite among her members. Making all proper allowance for those so circumstanced as to be excusable from attending, we may say not one-half of those who ought to be there are found at the prayer meeting. Some, we fear, almost forget that there is such a meeting, and others spend the hour when it is held, in idleness and vain conversation. Make it a practice never to be absent from the prayer meeting without an excuse that would satisfy your conscience and your God. Be so faithful in your duty in this respect that your brethren will feel when you are absent you have a good reason for it. As well might the soldier be absent from his company in time of battle, as for the Christian to be absent from the prayer meeting.

## PROFITABLE ATTENDANCE UPON THE PRAYER MEETING.

IF each one attends the prayer meeting so as to be profited themselves, and so as to profit others, then all will be profited. By proper effort and care this undoubtedly may be the case. For God has not said unto the seed of Jacob, "seek ye me," in vain. Let the prayer meeting be remembered at the family altar and in the closet, at least on the day when it occurs. Go to the prayer meeting with a heart warmed by a Saviour's love, not simply to get fire from others, but prepared to impart a kindling influence yourself. Go to the prayer meeting, feeling that it may depend upon you whether it is animated and blessed with the Divine presence. The following anecdote is appropriate here:

"While teaching in the town of ———, we began to attend the stated Saturday evening meeting for religious conference and prayer. A retired clergyman conducted the exercises—one of the Old School, sound in the doctrines, acute in logic, firm in the faith. But his manner was to our sanguine temperament altogether too *bilious*,—formal, cold, very uninteresting. A long portion of Scripture was read in dull monotone, and then pious extracts from Scott's Commentaries in the same key. Prayers from two phlegmatic deacons, whose minds during the week had been clogged by the cares of this life, if they had ever been open, finished up the exercises. No singing, no cheerful smiles. Youth, of course, seldom came.

"Well, we were tired of it. It did us no good. It did us harm; it chilled what religion we had. We



could read and pray as well at home. So we stayed at home.

“One Saturday evening, soon after, we had a call from the grave clergyman. He looked very grave when he said, ‘Brother, are you going to our prayer meeting this evening?’

“‘No, sir.’

“‘Why not? We should like to see you there.’

“‘I can’t spend my time where I get no good. Your meetings have no spirituality in them.’

“It might have been unkind, if true, for us to say so, but we felt so and said so. The reply we shall never forget. It was cutting in logic, very solemn in utterance :

“‘*Come, then, and give us some, if you have any!*’

“We were rebuked and instructed.”

An assembly once gathered to listen to a minister of the gospel. The hour for preaching had arrived, but the minister delayed until the assembly began to be impatient to see him come in. Some one inquired if he might not be expected soon. “I fear,” replied the house-maid, “that he will not be here to-night. For, not long since, as I passed his room, I heard him in earnest conversation with some one. He entreated him to go with him to the meeting. He told him he could not go to the meeting to-night unless he would accompany him.” Soon the preacher appeared. The Lord was with him and blessed his labors that night to the salvation of many souls. Now let those who attend the prayer meeting be as anxious and pray as

earnestly that God would go with them and their gatherings, for prayer would be seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. If possible, visit the closet before starting for the prayer meeting, and beseech God to go with you there.

Another thing preparatory to a profitable attendance upon the prayer meeting, is a view of the state of things in your own heart and in the community around you. A just view of your need of spiritual blessings and of the importance of such blessings to the community around you, will have a tendency to move you to earnest prayer. Every Christian ought to inform himself in reference to the state of religion, and the spiritual condition of the people of the community in which he resides. Thus he will find abundant motives to pray earnestly for the descent of the Holy Spirit, and to exhort others to prayer.

It is a good preparation to attendance upon the prayer meeting, to consider the promises made to prayer, especially to united prayer. If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father who is in heaven. The prayers of Nehemiah and Daniel, so fervent and so prevalent, were prompted by a consideration of the condition of the Jewish church, and of the promises of God to the penitent, (Nehemiah, 1; Dan. 9.) Another thing preparatory to a profitable attendance upon the prayer meeting, is thorough self-examination with a view of laying aside every thing which might hinder your prayers. See to

it that there is no iniquity in your heart, that no unforgiving feeling lurks there, that in all things you are striving to glorify God, and so to live that you may hope for his blessing.

Nor is this all. Consider the important results that may be produced by the prayer meeting. The hearts of Christians may be there quickened and comforted. The whole variety of means for the prosperity of religion may be rendered effectual by blessings there secured. In reference to a powerful revival of religion in one of our western cities, a devoted sister in Christ remarked, "it commenced in our female prayer meeting." Go then to the prayer meeting, feeling that the most important interests are pending upon its result. That the greatest blessings may be secured by properly waiting upon God there.

Once more, strive to secure the attendance of your impenitent friends and neighbors upon the prayer meeting. Let all the neighborhood be invited to attend. The very exertion to bring the impenitent to the meeting, tends to awaken a spirit of prayer. And Christians can pray better for those who are without hope and without God in the world when they are present with them, where their eyes behold them in the place of prayer.

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#### SOME THOUGHTS IN REFERENCE TO REMARKS IN PRAYER MEETINGS.

THOSE who speak in prayer meetings should avoid lengthy remarks. By protracting their remarks many

of the most able brethren almost destroy their usefulness in this particular. It seems as if they would never come to a close. Be ready to come directly to what you have to say, and confine your remarks to a single point, and you will be likely to succeed in avoiding this most grievous fault. Five minutes for one individual to speak is generally better than ten. Ten minutes should never be exceeded. It is better to make a failure and be short, than to make a good speech and occupy a third of the time of the prayer meeting.

Those who speak in meetings for prayer should avoid discouraging remarks. They tend to destroy the object of the prayer meeting. Facts may be stated, however forbidding; existing evils may be presented, but it should not be done with a desponding, but with a believing, trusting heart. Those who come to the prayer meeting to speak to others should come with a strong faith in God and his promises, prepared to stir up their brethren to encourage themselves in the Lord their God. All have despondency and discouragement enough, but not faith enough. Let brethren throw their remarks into the right scale. Remember the joy of the Lord is your strength. Though there be nothing encouraging in the state of things around you, yet the Lord's arm is not shortened that it can not save, neither his ear heavy that it can not hear. And there is no state of things so deplorable as to forbid the people of God confidently to expect glorious things as the result of earnest prayer and persevering effort.

Complaining, scolding remarks are out of place in a

prayer meeting. The most frequent case of such remarks is when Christians come to the prayer meeting and find but few assembled. In such circumstances, those who have come together have already all the depression they can bear, and therefore complaining, scolding remarks, spoil the meeting.

Often have I heard such remarks made by brethren who had not for a long time been to a prayer meeting, and who did not for a long time come again. Be constant yourself at the prayer meeting. Go there with a warm heart. Strive to get others to go. Pray in your closet that God would pour upon his people the spirit of grace and supplication, and you will not long have to complain of the want of attendance or of life in the prayer meeting.

Another kind of complaining, scolding remarks, is in reference to evils existing in the church. For instance, after the meeting has commenced, a brother rises and says there is bitterness, hard feeling, and evil-speaking among the members of the church, and we can not expect a blessing till difficulties are settled. Now, such things are to be regretted, ought to be removed, but complaints about them in the prayer meeting do no good. That is not the place to bring them up by way of general remark. If a brother wishes to confess his faults, and there is prayer offered for him, it is well. But mere complaints about evils are only a damper upon the meeting, and tend to diminish attendance upon it. Rather urge the cultivation of a forgiving, loving spirit. Humbly confess your own short comings

and pray that a spirit of harmony and love may prevail among you.

Another fault in speaking in prayer meetings consists in replying to remarks made by others. This is seldom profitable. It is true, sentiments may sometimes be advanced which need attention, but generally any thing that looks like disputation is out of place in a prayer meeting. Its tendency is to produce an effect the direct opposite of that for which the more spiritual part feel that they have assembled. If by any thing advanced, a wrong impression has been made, as a general rule, the better way is to endeavor to make a right impression by some direct remarks, such as you would make if nothing had been said.

Another thing worthy of notice is the feeling among brethren that something able, instructive, or new must be advocated by those speaking in a prayer meeting. On account of this feeling, many refuse to speak. Now it is to stir up the mind, impress familiar truth, and gain the influence of sympathising hearts, that a word should be said in a prayer meeting. It is impulse rather than edification which is to be sought there. If but a few of the brethren of a neighborhood or of a church composing a prayer meeting say any thing, this end will not be accomplished, and the prayer meeting will languish. If brethren generally would be willing to say a word in a prayer meeting, there are thousands of instances in which they would be numerously attended and be productive of great good, where now they dwindle and die.

Another fault to be noticed, is frequent speaking by the same individual. In a prayer meeting, as a general rule, once speaking is enough. We may except the case where the exercises of the meeting have to be performed by a very few, or where some stranger is present. As the meeting progresses, those who have first spoken have thoughts occurring which they are inclined to utter. Some arise as these thoughts occur, and thus speak repeatedly. It is true, however, generally, that the most good is effected when brethren confine themselves to once speaking. Let brethren speak briefly, let it be from the heart, let it be for Christ, pointed and stirring, and let that suffice.

I will only add, as an expression of thought and feeling, the singing of hymns, spontaneously and memoriter, is a great help to a prayer meeting. Almost every variety of religious feeling may be expressed by appropriate hymns. And hymns committed to memory and sung spontaneously in a prayer meeting, have double the force of those given out and sung from a book. A good variety of hymns ought to be committed to memory by the Christians of every neighborhood and every church. I have attended prayer meetings where such singing in desired effect seemed to exceed all the exhortations. And there can be no good reason why a prayer meeting should lack the interest which such an exercise would give it. Then commit to memory a variety of suitable hymns, and sing them, as occasion requires, when you assemble for prayer.

## MANNER OF PRAYER IN PRAYER MEETINGS.

THE prayers offered in prayer meetings should be brief and earnest. Brevity is generally desirable. Where there are a goodly number to take part in a prayer meeting it is indispensable.

But it would be vain to speak of brevity unless we present some plan to attain it. The reason why brethren fail of brevity, is that they fall into the habit of going through a certain introduction, and a certain range of topics in prayer. They do not come directly to the object to be prayed for. In consequence of this, it is often the case that those who lead in prayer go over essentially the same ground. •

It is true that repetition can not be entirely avoided, and yet there may be variety in the prayers offered. The following suggestions will aid in securing this object. Let the introductory and the closing prayers be offered especially for a blessing upon the exercises of the meeting, as they have been or are to be performed. Let them be confined mainly to these objects. In this way the mind is prepared to enter upon the exercises of the meeting, and to carry away a good impression from it.

Let the other prayers be confined to one or two points or topics, and let those who lead in prayer come directly to the objects they have to present, and make them the burden of their prayer.

To accomplish this method, let the leader of the meeting present such requests for prayer as may have



been handed to him. Then let him call upon some brother to remember one of those requests, and another another, and so on. Or let the leader have particular objects to present before God, and one brother be called upon to remember one object, and another a different object in prayer. Or if this is in any manner objectionable or not done, then let each one who leads in prayer, take one particular subject and make that the main burden of his petitions. If this is done, and those who lead in prayer come directly to the object for which they pray, there will be both brevity and variety, and a good number may take part in a meeting of an hour. The spirit of the meeting will thus be kept up, and the interest be increasing to the end.

Such directness of petition in prayer is not unscriptural. The Saviour prayed, "Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me, nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt." The publican smote upon his breast, saying: "God be merciful to me a sinner."

Where this directness of petition is not practiced, there are not only lengthy prayers offered, but there are a great many things mentioned, while the thing which should be the main burden of petition is often only alluded to, and sometimes left out wholly. I have known such cases as this occur: A minister in time of religious awakening invites all who desire the prayers of Christians, to manifest it by rising. A number arise. The minister calls upon a brother to lead in prayer. He offers a long prayer, and never once mentions those

who have asked for prayer, and who are in a critical condition adapted to call forth from every Christian's heart the most earnest supplication.

Whenever there is a subject proposed for prayer, he who leads should make that the direct and main burden of his petition. In no other way does he express the desires of the meeting. When this is done there is agreement as to what they shall ask among all Christians present.

It may at first be difficult for such as have been accustomed to go through a certain routine in their prayers, to use the directness we have here recommended. Practice will make it easy. Let them in their private devotions choose a subject for each day in the week, which shall be the burden of their intercessions at the throne of grace. Let them arrange in their minds and get distinct ideas upon the various topics which will generally come up in meetings for social prayer, and soon they will be able to plead in prayer with all the directness which is desirable.

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#### THINGS TO BE AVOIDED IN PRAYER MEETINGS.

EXPRESSIONS which are personal should be avoided in prayer. I mean expressions which are personal in a bad sense. Prayer should express the wants of those who assemble for prayer. He who leads in prayer should express what are the desires or real wants of others. Praying is not preaching nor exhorting, but supplicating blessings upon ourselves and others. Such

as lead in prayer may enter into the real case of those for whom they pray, the more the better. The backslider, the lukewarm, and those interested in the work of the Lord, and glowing with love to souls, should all be remembered in prayer. The children and the youth, those in manhood and old age, the careless and the anxious, should all be mentioned by the suppliant. It is often interesting for one brother to confine his prayer more particularly to the case of one class, and for another brother to pray for another class of persons, as well as for one to remember one, and another another object. Particularly does this remark apply where there are many to take part in a prayer meeting. But it is one thing to sympathize with others and have desires for their welfare, struggling for utterance, and quite another thing to take occasion in prayer to rebuke and upbraid them, and labor so to express ourselves as to give a hit to somebody present, or to get off some hard things which we think it will do to express in prayer, but which we should not feel free to express otherwise.

It must be an abomination to God so to pervert prayer. It must be provoking to God to come before him so destitute of the spirit required in his word, which teaches Christians to be kind, tender-hearted, forgiving one another even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven them. When we come before God in prayer, it is best to take a low place before him ourselves, and cry with the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner." We should also come with feelings of forgiveness and charity toward our fellow men.

But did not Nehemiah and Daniel speak of the sins of others in those prayers which God graciously regarded? Certainly they did, and we may do the same in the manner in which they did it. We can not be too humble on account of our own sins, or the sins of others. It is proper often to confess the sins of others in public prayer, and in so doing to enumerate them; but it should be done only by those who with tenderness of heart mourn over those sins. There is but one instance recorded in the Bible of a person in prayer speaking contemptuously of others. That is the instance of the Pharisee, when he went with the publican into the temple to pray. The judgment which the Saviour passed upon that prayer is not such as to encourage others so to pray.

The prayer meeting is the place to meet with loving hearts. Any who have not grace enough to love all, even their enemies, who can not be kind, tender-hearted, forgiving, will not add any thing to the benefit of a prayer meeting, either by their prayers or exhortations. Love is essential to the Spirit's presence to prevailing prayer. And fruitless prayer meetings are generally to be traced to the want of brotherly kindness and charity.

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A FATHER'S ADVICE TO HIS UNCONVERTED SON IN REFERENCE TO THE PRAYER MEETING.

MY DEAR SON;—You seem to have adopted, or, at least, to be influenced by an opinion often expressed,

that the prayer meeting is not for you, it is for Christians. This is not the case. If the unconverted are excluded from the prayer meeting they are self-excluded. Outside your own feelings, or unfounded opinions, there is no reason why you should stay away from the prayer meeting. God does not disapprove of your being there, for he often calls up the attention of sinners and often gives them peace in the prayer meeting. You can not stay away because Christian friends would not be pleased to see you there. Nothing would rejoice them more than to see their unconverted friends and acquaintances at the prayer meeting, unless it were to learn that they were seeking the Saviour, or converted to God. In the name of all Christians, I invite you to the prayer meeting.

If you would have divine truth impressed upon your mind, and become awakened to the things which belong to your peace, go to the prayer meeting. Many by so doing have had their attention called to divine things. After they had attended a prayer meeting in college, two students took an evening walk together. One of them was a professed Christian, who had taken part in the prayer meeting. The other was without God and without hope in the world. After they had walked awhile he said to his Christian companion, "I wish I was good enough to take part in your prayer meetings." Upon further conversation it was found that by that and previous meetings he had been convinced that there is a happiness in religion to which he was a stranger, and that it was needful for him. He

continued to attend the stated meetings for prayer, and soon his voice was heard ascending to the Throne of Grace. This is but one of thousands of instances. If there is one place on earth where God is nearer to the soul than any other, it is the prayer meeting.

Another reason why I would urge you to attend the prayer meeting, is that it tends to direct and deepen serious feeling. If you are anxious about yourself, if you feel that you are a sinner lost, needing salvation, go to the prayer meeting. Unless it be the closet or the inquiry meeting, there is no place more adapted to the wants of the anxious, more favorable to their becoming savingly interested in Christ, than the prayer meeting. Multitudes have there found the Saviour.

Another reason why you should attend the prayer meeting is that you thus secure a more prominent place in the feelings and prayers of God's people. They desire the salvation of all. They pray for all men. But your presence at the prayer meeting brings you distinctly to their minds, and calls forth their earnest desires for your salvation. And they feel as if they had more encouragement to pray for you in consequence of your attendance upon this means of grace.

You can not better spend the hour allotted to social prayer than by attending the prayer meeting. You will never regret it if you are constant there. If you attend it with a sincere desire of getting good to your soul, it will be a source of joy to you through eternity.

PART III.  
REVIVALS.

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REVIVALS DESIRABLE.

“O, Lord, revive thy work!”

THERE is no reason to expect that God will revive his work until his people desire it. They can not in an acceptable manner pray, “O Lord, revive Thy work,” without earnest desires for the outpouring of the Spirit. The most glorious revivals of religion have been preceded by such desires for the blessing on the part of the people of God, that by the most earnest labors and fervent prayers they have endeavored to prepare the way of the Lord. In such cases God has soon poured them out a blessing. It is only when Christians earnestly desire the revival of God’s work, that they are prepared to receive it and to do their part toward carrying it forward. Indifference about the work of the Lord grieves the Spirit, and stands in the way of the blessing. We hear of revival preachers. Would that there were more. But what is more needed still is a revival spirit, a disposition to labor and pray for the outpouring of the Spirit among the brethren and sisters of the churches. There are abundant reasons why they should desire revivals of religion.

They should desire them on their own account. When God revives his work they more fully realize the vanity of the world and the importance of heavenly things. They make rapid attainments in holiness.

They have joys nearer like those of the heavenly world than they have at other times. "These are glorious times," said a venerable minister of the gospel as he came out from a meeting where many young people had assembled to inquire what they must do to be saved. Christians see divine things in a new and happy light in times of revival. A Christian makes more attainment in the knowledge of divine things in one year, in times of revival, than in ten years in the ordinary state of things. If you pant for clearer views and brighter joys, you will earnestly desire a revival of religion.

Another reason why a revival is desirable, is that it brings great good to the church. It promotes love and union among the people of God. It brings religion into the ascendancy in their hearts, and those little things which occasioned alienations among them appear of far less magnitude than when selfishness and the world obscured their view of divine things. Hence they lay aside their alienations, and receive one another. They not only do this, but as they see that their animosities have injured the cause of religion, which now they desire to promote, they confess their faults one to another, and pray one for another. Now they convince the world that they are the disciples of Christ, because they love one another.

Revivals of religion often prevent the necessity of discipline. The following incident shows the truth of this assertion: In one of our large cities there had been a gathering of young people at the house of one



of the members of the church, in which they engaged in amusements scandalous to religion. Some of the members of the family who were professors joined with them in these amusements. What was to be done? "Let us labor and pray for a revival," said the venerable pastor. The revival came. Most of this circle of young people who were without hope, were converted. Then they met to pray, and the necessity for any discipline disappeared.

Another reason why revivals of religion are desirable, is that they are grand means by which the prosperity of religion is secured. Most of those who compose our churches, the private members, the officers and ministers, and most of those who have gone forth to plant churches in destitute regions, and in foreign realms, were converted in revivals of religion. No great prosperity has ever come to the church only through revivals of religion, nor can we expect there ever will. All the great accessions to the church have been the fruit of revivals. Converts are to be multiplied, the millennium is to be ushered in by missions and revivals. How desirable for the prosperity of religion in all the churches, that the Lord would revive his work.

Without revivals, the gospel will reach but few in its saving power. The great multitude will press on their way down to perdition. If upon the churches generally, the Lord pours out his Spirit, hundreds of thousands will become the children of God, who would otherwise perish in their sins. Think of the vast

multitudes who are unreconciled to God; consider what must be their condition in death and in eternity if they remain unconverted, and you will not fail to cry "O Lord, revive thy work!" Think of the blessings which a revival of religion brings upon many who were far from God and righteousness, and you will be constrained to prepare the way of the Lord.

Revivals of religion are desirable as the means of promoting reform in society. When the Spirit is poured out, the desert blossoms as the rose, and the wilderness and the solitary places are made glad. It is the revivals which have followed the labors of missionaries, that have wrought such a glorious reform in the Sandwich Islands. By the outpouring of the Spirit in the North of Ireland, the whole aspect of society was changed for the better. The evils which infest society are manifold. Profanity, intemperance, infidelity, and dishonesty, and corruption in private life and in public, abound. Where are we to look for a removal of these evils? To revivals of religion. Let them prevail throughout our land, and we shall be saved from that most fearful of all evils, destruction by our sins and vices. Though spurious revivals are followed by nothing but evil, genuine revivals are the greatest blessings to a community.

"When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory." He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer. This shall be written for the generation to come, and the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord.

## HOW TO SECURE A REVIVAL.

"I will be inquired of by the house of Israel."

AMONG the means of securing the outpouring of God's spirit, the revival of his work, prayer has a prominent place. It was in reference to such a blessing that God said he would be inquired of. Read the first chapter of Nehemiah, and see how he prayed before the great revival which took place under his ministry. Before the day of Pentecost the disciples were all of one accord in one place to offer their prayers to God.

Importunate prayer is a sure precursor of a revival of religion. By importunate prayer we understand such prayer as was offered by Jacob when he said "I will not let thee go except thou bless me," or such prayer as is offered when the people of God cry day and night unto Him. It implies a disposition to pray until the object of prayer is gained. It implies faith in the promises of God, a conviction that the fault is not in Him that our prayers are not answered in souls renewed and sins forgiven. The Lord's arm is not shortened that it can not save, nor his ear heavy that it can not hear. When his people come into the right place before God, he will bestow the desired blessing. Prayer is not a mere experiment which a want of importunity implies, but a divinely appointed means of obtaining blessings.

The tendency of importunity to bring Christians into a proper state before God, is illustrated by the following

instance: A church surrounded by others, enjoying the outpouring of the Spirit, held daily morning prayer meetings for several weeks. But no special influences of the Spirit, nothing of a revival appeared. At length, several were discouraged, and remarked that it seemed to them that they must be passed by without a blessing, and they might as well discontinue their daily prayer meeting. One brother, however, remarked, "we must persevere. The devil," he said, "has been driven out of all the churches around us, but daily follows us here to prevent the exercise of that faith that will secure the blessing." It was concluded to continue the meeting. As they went out that morning, two brethren met, with tears, and said "we must not give up without a blessing." They agreed that whatever might be the course of others, they would pray on until the blessing came. The next morning witnessed a breaking down, a casting of themselves wholly upon the mercy of God, among those who spoke and prayed, which convinced all present that God had really appeared for them. Soon the glad tidings spread that many were inquiring what they must do to be saved. Grace triumphed through the importunate prayers of God's people. So has it often done. The Syrophenician woman who came to Christ crying for mercy, received no encouragement of a favorable answer to her first or second petition. But she prayed again, and Christ said unto her, "O, woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt." So in his word, God teaches us to pray for his Spirit. And not only in his

word, but also in his dealings with his people, God has given great encouragement to importunate prayer.

The following instance occurred under the observation of the writer: In one of the western cities, religious declension generally prevailed. Serious minded Christians began to feel that unless God soon interposed by his Spirit, Satan would completely triumph.

The brethren and sisters of one of the leading churches began to feel deeply for the cause of Christ, and to mourn over the desolation of Zion. They resolved to look to God. They prayed. They persevered in prayer. Every afternoon for three months the sisters of the church were seen going to the vestry of the meeting-house, and after remaining awhile, silently and solemnly retiring. In the evening the brethren were seen doing the same thing. There together they mourned over the low state of Zion, confessed their sins, and prayed to the God of Israel. At length, on the evening of the weekly lecture, there came in a note from a man quite advanced in life, stating that he felt himself to be a lost sinner, and desired the prayers of the people of God for him. At the close of the lecture the minister read the note, and before offering the closing prayer, gave others an opportunity to ask to be remembered in the prayers of God's people. Forty instantly arose to signify this request. A powerful revival of religion thus commenced, in which more than two hundred were converted and brought into the church.

Be importunate, persevering in prayer. With hum-

ble, penitent, obedient hearts inquire of God for the blessings you need. If I may so express it, a holding-on spirit in prayer is the thing needed. Only let Christians adopt in practice the maxim, men ought always to pray and not to faint, and the arm of the Lord would be revealed to build up Zion every-where.

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#### HOW TO SECURE A REVIVAL.

“And whatsoever we ask we receive of Him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.”—I. John 3: 22.

It is essential to prevailing prayer not only that we possess an obedient, loving heart, but that we diligently use all the means in our power to secure the blessings prayed for. To secure the objects prayed for, God has placed means in the hands of his people. He always works by means. It would be presumption for the farmer to pray for a crop without preparing the ground and sowing the seed. It would be folly for one to pray for advancement in knowledge while neglecting all means of information. So it is in reference to spiritual blessings. If we would receive them in answer to prayer, we must put forth all proper efforts to secure them. If we pray for holiness we must strive to cultivate holiness in our hearts and lives. If brethren would love one another with a pure heart fervently, they must strive to exercise and cultivate brotherly kindness. If we pray that the church may be engaged in the work of the Lord we must do what

we can by our example and efforts to stir them up to activity. If we expect God to answer our prayer for the conversion of our friends and neighbors, we must put forth efforts for their conversion. A word spoken to a fellow-being, a tract put into their hands, an invitation to a meeting for prayer or public worship, has often resulted in their conversion. It is those who are watchful, diligent in their attention to the means of grace, and faithful in their duties, whose prayers for sanctification are answered. It is the parent who governs and faithfully instructs his children, that sees them turn to God in answer to his supplications. It is the church who are putting forth personal and associated effort, using all means to enlighten the minds and awaken the consciences of sinners, that see them flock to Christ in answer to their prayers. Laboring for the attainment of desired objects tends to keep alive the spirit of prayer. It enables the Christian to pray with an earnestness and a faith which would be otherwise impracticable.

Before the most copious showers of grace which have descended upon the church, there has been a disposition to repent of neglected duties. Christians have returned to God and exerted themselves to promote his cause. Speaking of the great revival in Ireland, "It is right it should be known," says the Rev. S. M. Dill, of Ballymena, "that this movement has not come upon us quite so suddenly as people at a distance might suppose. I am able to testify that there has been a gradual but perceptible improvement in the state of

religion throughout this district for some years. Ministers were led to speak to the people with greater earnestness about the things that belong to their peace. Attendance on the public ordinances of religion had considerably increased. "Open-air preaching was extensively practiced. Sabbath-schools were greatly multiplied. Prayer meetings were growing up in many districts. Sacred music, which had been much neglected, was cultivated with ardor and success. And altogether the people were in a state of expectation, a state which passed into one of earnest expectancy when the glad news of the American revivals reached our shores.

"He that soweth sparingly shall also reap sparingly ; and he that soweth bountifully shall also reap bountifully." The souls within their bounds are committed to the care of the church—let the church labor for their salvation. When in love and fidelity they have labored to induce them to turn to God and live, then, so far as such effort is concerned, they have done the things that are pleasing in the sight of God, and may expect to receive the things they ask of him.

When the church shall generally engage in efforts to save souls, when all her members shall be ready for any service in which they can promote the cause of God, then will be witnessed such answers to prayer as have never yet rejoiced the hearts of God's people.



## HOW TO SECURE A REVIVAL.

“Forgive, if ye have ought against any.”

IF the people of God would experience a revival of his work, they must prepare their hearts for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Until *they* receive the promise of the Holy Ghost, sinners will not inquire what they must do. But “when He is come, he will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.” Now in order to receive the Holy Spirit, the people of God must exercise forgiveness one toward another.

Forgiveness is expressly commanded. “Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you.” Those who refuse to extend forgiveness to others, live in disobedience to Christ. The way of the Lord will not be prepared until all unforgiving thoughts and feelings are put away from the people of God.

It is distinctly stated that neglect to forgive our fellow-men will prevent our receiving forgiveness of God. “If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses.” We are not even to pray for forgiveness, only as we forgive. “Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors,” is the language which our Saviour directs us to use in prayer. If unforgiven, the peace

of God can not reign in the heart, nor will the Spirit of God deign to dwell there.

“The Spirit, like a peaceful dove,  
Flies from the realms of noise and strife.”

There are times when the Spirit of God seems to be hovering over a church, and nothing but an unforgiving spirit keeps it away and delays a rain of righteousness. When a forgiving spirit is manifested among the people of God, then will their prayers prevail, and the Holy Spirit will descend upon them.

“During a protracted meeting held in G——, a pleasant summer retreat in one of our southern States, an address was made to those who were professedly the people of God. Amongst other things they were exhorted to cherish a spirit of brotherly love, and if they had any quarrel with another, to forgive. They were affectionately urged to pass an act of forgiveness without delay, and to seize the very first opportunity to extend the hand, and to do it cordially. In about twenty minutes after, while the services were yet going on, an elderly lady rose, passed by me, and gave her hand to another lady. I certainly did not expect the exhortation to operate so soon, or at least in this way, but verily I was not displeased—no one was displeased. On the contrary a wave of delicious feeling passed over the whole assembly. Many eyes were filled with tears, and methinks in that moment the God of love looked propitious down. Mark the sequel! The lady at that time had two sons and a daughter, all grown, and all yet unconverted. Before the protracted meeting closed she

had the unspeakable satisfaction of seeing all three rejoicing in the hope of glory! What is this but the broad seal of heaven's approbation? 'Beloved,' says John, 'let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.'"

"Another case occurred in Virginia. Whilst addressing professors of religion, I, as my custom was, urged the great duty of forgiveness, and in order to give greater effect to my exhortations, I stated the case already mentioned as one pleasing to God, and worthy of all commendation, and then made a remark of this kind: 'If there are any present in similar circumstances, let them go and do likewise.' Whilst I was yet speaking, an elder of the church reached out his hand over the benches to one who sat at some distance, and with much feeling said, 'Neighbor, here is my hand.' Another elder also arose, a man of silvery locks, and hurrying to another part of the house, gave his hand to an individual, who grasped it and said aloud, 'This is the very thing I have long wished for.' Need I say that a revival followed? Of a truth we had blessed times."

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"TAKE UP THE STUMBLING-BLOCK OUT OF THE WAY OF MY PEOPLE."—Isa. 57: 14.

ONE great hindrance to the conversion of the impenitent, is the wicked conduct of professing Christians. It is true, sinners may find fault with Christians when there is no occasion. In such cases, at heart they esteem them. And their continued fault-finding renders

dark, indeed, the prospect of their conversion. But when the wrong conduct of professing Christians gives them occasion to infer a want of a right principle, it often proves a fatal stumbling-block. Sometimes, brethren endowed with superior gifts destroy their influence for good, and create a prejudice against religion by some inconsistent conduct. Then, stumbling-blocks have been thrown in the way. They can be removed only by real reform; and this reform must sometimes be manifested by a humble confession of faults.

The Rev. Norris Day gives the following sketch: "In a place where I was preaching, some years since, an old backslider repented, one Sabbath evening, and consecrated himself anew to God. The next morning I was in the shop of an impenitent man, and while there I named the circumstance of this man's speaking and praying in meeting the night previous. He exclaimed, 'Well, I am glad I was not there to hear him; for had I been present I would have taken my hat, and left forthwith.' I said to him, Why so? are you not desirous to have your neighbors repent? 'Repent, sir?' said he; 'yes, but I have no confidence in him, and do not wish to hear him pray.' But perhaps he has repented, and if he is truly penitent you ought to be willing, and even rejoice to hear him pray, said I. 'But,' said he, 'he has abused me wickedly, and I must have some evidence of penitence before I will hear him pray, unless he can run faster than I can.' I left the shop, but business called me back there again before night, when I found this man in a different state of mind altogether. He

came to me in tears, and remarked, 'Mr. Day, I can hear that man pray now.' Ah, said I, what has produced the change in your feelings? 'Oh,' said he, 'you had hardly left the shop when he came in, and, with deep emotion, took me by the hand, and confessed his wrong, and besought me to forgive him. He is honest,' said he, 'and I most freely forgive him. I wish I was in as good a state of mind as he is. Now,' continued he, 'I want to hear him pray.'"

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#### THE BACKSLIDER'S RETURN.

"Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit, then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee."

THERE is a joy in God's salvation. There is a joy in the sense of pardoned sin. There is a joy in God when we contemplate with delight his glorious perfections. There is a joy from God when he lifts upon us the light of his reconciled face. There is a joy in the consciousness of deliverance from the dominion of sin, and of grace sufficient for the duties and trials of life. But this joy the backslider has lost. One consequence is, that no influence goes from him adapted to lead others to know and serve God. His light ceases to shine. His prayers no longer prevail. He has no heart to say to his neighbor or his brother, "know the Lord." For aught those in a state of declension would do, sinners in unbroken ranks would go down to hell.

In all these respects the case is changed when the

backslider returns. Oh, it is a glorious indication of good, when those who have been in a state of religious declension are humbled before God; when they are disposed to confess and forsake their sins. Such an event is a little cloud which betokens a shower of grace.

“Where did David propose to commence the work of God?” I answer, in his own heart, where every Christian and minister on earth should commence if he would have success. Mark, he cried out to God, “restore unto me the joys of thy salvation.” “Then,” ah, yes, “then will I teach transgressors thy ways.” And what shall be the result when the joys of God’s salvation are fully restored to his own heart? Result? Let David answer. But note his words. Did he say—and *perhaps* sinners shall be converted unto God? There is no *perhaps* in the case. How confidently he affirms, “and sinners shall be converted unto thee.” David understood too well the influence he would have over others, when his heart was full of God, to speak doubtfully. He knew full well that if the church were filled with the Holy Ghost, the impenitent would feel her influence, and multitudes would flock to Christ.”

In a town where the writer was once laboring, we had assembled in a school-house for an evening meeting. Soon after the meeting was open for prayer and remarks, a brother who had long been in a backslidden state arose and spoke as follows: “I feel deeply that I have lived beneath my privilege and duty as a Christian. I have been endeavoring to return unto the Lord, and renewedly consecrate myself to him. I hope I shall be

enabled hereafter to lead a different life. Pray for me, dear brethren, that I may be enabled to feel as I ought to feel, and act as I ought to act." Tears flowed from the eyes of many a brother and sister, and unusual solemnity rested upon the meeting. From that time the revival, which had commenced, went forward with increased power. O what a responsibility rests upon backsliders to return to God. My backslidden brother! it may be that your return to God would not only secure your own peace and safety, but the salvation of many souls. Be zealous therefore and repent.

Those in the church whose course has been onward and upward, and those who have received refreshing from the presence of the Lord, should not forget their brethren in a state of declension. Let them labor with them, pray with them and for them. Let the whole church be visited, and all backsliders urged to awake. If you would see the work of God revived, and sinners converted unto Him, you can do nothing more sure to accomplish the result than to induce the backslidden children of God to return unto him.

Since writing the above, I met with a brother belonging to a church in a neighboring town, who are enjoying a glorious revival of religion. I inquired of him how this work commenced. Said he, "It originated in a family who, about a year since, moved into the neighborhood of our meeting-house. The parents, though professors, had lived totally regardless of the claims of religion. But a few weeks ago, they received intelligence of the death of a beloved son, who belonged to

the army. After this they returned to God with broken hearts and contrite spirits. Their humble confessions and the great change in their conduct was the means of awakening Christians and arresting the attention of sinners, and thus the glorious work began."

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#### HOW TO PROMOTE A REVIVAL OF RELIGION.

WHEN the disciples of Christ attempted to cast out an evil spirit from a young man, and failed, they brought him to Christ, and he cast him out. Then said the disciples unto Christ, "Why could not we cast him out?" Jesus said unto them, "Because of your unbelief; for verily I say unto you, if ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." Christians will see the power and grace of God displayed in the triumphs of the cross, if they only have faith as they ought. But in order to the possession of this faith, they must fast and pray. Days of fasting and prayer, properly observed, are of great importance in preparing the way for the descent of the Holy Spirit, and the revival of God's work. Every church not enjoying the special influences of the Holy Spirit is, to a greater or less extent, in a state of declension. In order to be blessed, it is essential that they should unitedly examine their lives, confess and forsake their sins, return to God, and



renewedly consecrating themselves to his service, pray for the descent of the Holy Spirit.

The thoughts which I offer on this topic were suggested by one who has had great success in promoting revivals.

Let the church fix upon a day for fasting and prayer. Let it be notified some weeks beforehand. Let Christians think of it, and try to meet it in a proper manner.

Let it be preceded by a general visitation of the church and people. Let those who perform this work be faithful in religious conversation and prayer. Let them also mention the proposed day for fasting and prayer, and urge all to attend upon the services of that day.

Let the church come on the morning of that day, and speak freely one to another. Let them humble themselves together before God, in view of their past sins. Let them resolve upon a reformation of life. Let them unitedly confess and forsake their sins, and pray for mercy, and the blessing of God will descend upon them. "Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord." "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, and prove me now herewith if I will not pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room to receive it."

Let this meeting be followed by other exercises adapted to impress the truth upon the minds of the impenitent, and the arm of the Lord will be revealed.

"In a certain town in Connecticut," said the brother to whom I have alluded, "I was engaged to supply the

pulpit for a season. Soon after commencing my labors, I prevailed upon the church to appoint a season of fasting and prayer. It was announced three weeks beforehand. In the meantime, every family in town was visited and urged to attend the meetings on that day. On the arrival of the day, it was found that this effort had not been in vain. In the morning we held a prayer meeting, which the church very generally attended. Most of the members spoke, and many led in prayer. It was truly a season of humiliation before the Lord. In the afternoon a sermon was preached, and many of the impenitent were present. The evening service was attended by a congregation larger than usually assembled there upon the Sabbath. During this service the presence of the Spirit was specially manifested. Three young persons, during the sermon, found the Saviour, and consecrated themselves to his service. From that time the work went forward, and a glorious revival of religion was experienced."

Said the brother to me, who had labored with probably more than fifty churches, "I never have known a church observe a day of fasting and prayer in the manner above indicated, without experiencing a refreshing from the presence of the Lord." "Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting."

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#### HOW TO PROMOTE A REVIVAL.

ONE important means of promoting a revival of religion, is personal visitation. When a revival has com-

menced, arrangements should be made for a special visitation of the people as a means of promoting it. Let the church see to it, then, that every family within their bounds are visited. Let every Christian be stirred up to activity and prayer. Let every unconverted person be conversed and prayed with. Let the importance of the season of heavenly visitation be impressed upon their attention. Let them be warned of the danger of passing through a season of revival without giving their attention to the things belonging to their peace.

In the town of B., there had commenced a revival of religion. Already about a score were rejoicing in hope. There was a sermon preached, urging the necessity of laboring for the attainment of those objects for which we pray. At the close of the service, the church appointed a committee of two for every school district, whose duty it was to visit every family, converse with the members, and offer prayer. Many souls attributed their conversion to that visitation. Not only were Christians quickened, but many who had long lived in the neglect of the house of God and all attention to religious things, were brought into the house of God and into the fold of Christ.

The following incident occurred during that visitation. Deacon B. called upon a man residing near him who had not visited the sanctuary for five years. He had, however, recently attended a few evening meetings held near his house. The following is the conversation and its results :

*Deacon B.*—"I have called to converse with you on the subject of religion. It is a time of unusual interest among us. Many are inquiring what they must do to be saved, and others are indulging hope. Do you feel no anxiety for your salvation?"

*Mr. N.*—"I do not know that my mind is at all disturbed. I feel nothing unusual upon religious things."

*Deacon B.*—"You have undoubtedly spent the largest part of your days upon earth. If you live through this revival without obtaining religion, it is much to be feared that you will die in your sins. I hope you will attend to the subject at this favored time."

This interview was closed by prayer. Then Mr. N. in a thoughtful mood went to his barn. He raised his hands to pull down some hay, when something seemed to say to him, Pray, pray. You must pray. Instantly there came such an overwhelming view of his sins that he fell to the floor. When he had recovered sufficiently to arise, he came into the house. But such was his agony that his family were alarmed. They inquired the cause of his distress. "Why, Deacon B. has killed me," replied Mr. N. Deacon B. was sent for by the family. He endeavored to point the distressed man to the Lamb of God, and earnestly prayed that God would have mercy upon him.

A few evenings after, on his way home from a meeting which he had been quite a distance to attend, he called upon an aged aunt, who for many years had walked with Christ in the regeneration. He entreated

her to pray for him. Discerning that it was time for him to submit to God, she replied, "You must pray for yourself." He fell upon his knees and prayed. Then God spake peace to his soul. He went home rejoicing. The heavens shone so bright with stars, and the earth all glittering in her winter drapery, seemed entirely new and full of the Creator's praise. When he arrived home he called his family together, opened his Bible, read a chapter, and offered an earnest prayer for their salvation. From that time he was regular in his attendance upon public worship, and a liberal supporter of the gospel.

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#### HINDRANCES TO REVIVALS.

I REFER not here to those things which hinder the commencement of revivals. I would rather inquire what are the hindrances to a revival after it has commenced. What inquiry could be more important! When God comes down in the blessed influences of his Holy Spirit, the mountains flow down at his presence. Backsliders are reclaimed, and rejoice in God's salvation. Christians are refreshed, and sinners are inquiring what they must do to be saved. How desirable that this state of things should continue till all who are in their sins are induced to turn their feet into the Lord's testimonies. What, then, are the hindrances which must be avoided in order to the continuance of revivals?

Any thing which is adapted to turn the attention of people away to something else, is calculated to hinder a revival. Where there is a great work of God going forward, religion is the all-absorbing subject of thought and conversation. In the narrative of the great revival which occurred under his ministry, President Edwards says, "All the conversation in all companies was upon spiritual things, except so much as was necessary for ordinary secular business. Religion was with all sorts the great concern." While such is the case, the work of God will progress. But let the attention of people be called to other things, and divine realities cease to affect the heart. Even though the object of attention be a good one, still, unless it is directly connected with the subject of religion, its tendency is to hinder a revival. It is true, attention is sometimes diverted by things not under the control of Christians. But in seasons of revival, Christians should endeavor to keep their attention steadily on the great things of eternity, and strive to turn the attention of others to these things as much as possible, to the exclusion of all others. Then, more than ever, they who fear the Lord should speak often one to another. Then should they converse with their impenitent friends and neighbors. They should bear their brethren and sisters, the anxious and the careless sinner, in the arms of faith and prayer before the mercy seat.

Another way in which revivals are hindered, is by professed Christians neglecting to co-operate with each other in the use of means adopted to promote them.

Some stay away from meetings appointed to carry forward the work. A small proportion of the professed Christians in the neighborhood where a meeting is appointed attend it. Christians who have gone there hoping to see a new impulse given to the work, become discouraged, and anxious sinners who have gone there feeling that religion is the chief concern, become less instead of more deeply impressed. Another way of neglecting to co-operate with others, is in refusing to take part in meetings held for the promotion of revivals. Such a case as the following not unfrequently occurs: There is an unusual interest on the subject of religion. Some are entertaining the hope that they have become the children of God. Others are thoughtful. Now, together with professed Christians, they have assembled for conference and prayer. One brother leads in prayer. Another is called upon to do the same. He replies, "I must be excused this time." Another is asked to offer some remarks and prayer. He replies, "I should prefer to join with some other brother." The meeting closes, and Christians go home discouraged, and sinners go with less serious impressions than they brought to the meeting. Only let Christians be united in sustaining the means employed to promote a revival, and be ready each to fulfill his part, and the work will go forward.

The adoption of the sentiment that a revival must be transient, is a hindrance to its continuance. Those who adopt this sentiment will often be impatient to see very speedy results. If there has not been a recent

conversion they will begin to faint in effort and in prayer. Speaking of the revivals which occurred about 1800, Dr. Porter says, "In many cases it was a prevailing sentiment among Christians that revivals must be transient. Accordingly they expected their minister, at a time of special divine influence, to be very animated and active, and afterward to relapse into comparative indifference in the discharge of his duties. Their own conversation, too, and their prayers and efforts, were all accommodated to this paralyzing expectation, that sinners would soon cease to be awakened, and Christians to be fervent in spirit, and that after a few weeks or days in which religion should be the all-absorbing subject of thought to a whole people, all would, of course, relapse into insensibility. Where this sentiment among Christians prevailed, the continuance of a revival, though it had begun with the most promising appearances, was fatally hindered. I can not stop to discuss this point, but must say in passing that there is nothing in the character of God, nothing in the fearful condition of sinners or the obligations of Christians, nothing in any doctrines or promises of the Bible, limiting to a brief continuance the special work of the Holy Ghost among a people. Sloth and unbelief are at the bottom of this error in our churches. What! Shall the Christian persuade himself that it is excusable or unavoidable in him to be lukewarm through nine-tenths of his life because he is sometimes zealous for a month or two? Transient revivals! Shall our prayers and hopes rest satisfied with these? We are



drawing on apace to a revival that shall last a thousand years, and to another that shall be eternal. It is not impossible for a church to live continually in a revival state. This was evidently the case with the primitive Christians. It has been the case too with some in more modern days. It is said that when Thomas Shepherd preached in Cambridge, the common inquiry from Sabbath to Sabbath was, Who was converted to-day?

Another hindrance to revivals is found in the disposition of Christians to rest satisfied with what has been already accomplished. A revival has lasted a few weeks or months. So great a harvest is already secured that Christians are liable to feel that it is as great as can be expected in one season. Thus they limit the Holy One of Israel. Says Dr. Humphrey, "From what I have seen in revivals, I am satisfied that this is a very common case. The impression on many minds is something like this: the blessing has already been larger than we could have hoped, considering our infinite unworthiness, and we consider it as a rich earnest of what God will do for us when he shall come and revive us again; but we must wait. This may never be uttered, but such is the feeling. We must wait God's time for the conversion of the many who are left. In this way I fear Satan often gets an advantage of the church which he could not gain in any other. I look upon it as one of his stratagems, because he is never so busy as in revivals; and because I find nothing in the Bible to warrant the impression that the

work in progress must cease so long as there are sinners to be brought in, but that, contrariwise, there is much encouragement to pray and work on."

Men ought always to pray and not to faint, for the Lord's arm is not shortened that he can not save, nor his ear heavy that he can not hear. What if large numbers are rejoicing in hope, if there are still many unreconciled to God? Why should Christians cease to labor and to pray and to hope on? Suppose a ship has been wrecked at sea. Hundreds of human beings have been thrown into the deep. A goodly number have already been saved from a watery grave. But shall efforts cease on that account, as long as there is a possibility of saving others? You ought, as it were, to forget those already rescued, in consideration of such as are still in a perishing condition. The true principle is the same as that in reference to Christian attainment, leaving those things which are behind, and reaching forth to those which are before, to press forward.

Another hindrance to revivals consists in Christians allowing their graces to decline. In time of revival Christians ought to give special attention to the care of their own souls. This is a time for them renewedly to consecrate themselves to God, and to increase in love, faith, and every Christian grace. By a revival of religion the Christian should be brought permanently into a state of increased spiritual-mindedness, zeal, and activity in the cause of Christ. But not being sufficiently impressed with the importance of the progress of grace in their own hearts, as a means of securing

the promotion of the work of God and a permanently advanced state of piety in the church, they are not as careful as they should be to promote the prosperity of their own souls. Hence having their time occupied, and their strength exhausted in attending meetings and performing various labors, they in a measure neglect meditation and prayer. When such is the case, they carry with them to social meetings less of a realizing sense of divine things, and less of a spirit of prayer, than they possessed when the work of God first appeared among them. The inevitable result is a hindrance to the revival. Who can go into a prayer meeting and be instrumental of quickening the minds and encouraging the hearts of his brethren, that has not been himself refreshed by meditation and secret communion with God? Hence, when Christians begin to decline, by their exhortations and prayers, they produce a dampening effect upon the minds of others, and the revival comes to a stand.

Another hindrance to revivals is the indulgence of a sectarian spirit. Where such a spirit prevails, professors think but little of a revival unless it is in connection with their own particular denomination. It hinders that co-operation of Christians which is desirable and necessary. It leads to improper efforts to influence the minds of converts in favor of a particular church, to their disadvantage and the injury of the revival. It makes an impression upon the minds of the unconverted, prejudicial to religion. It has often been one of the most potent hindrances to the work

of the Spirit. It is occasion for joy that this spirit is dying out of the churches. Let Christians labor on together for the salvation of souls. Let their great object be to secure the salvation of as many as possible. Then, uninfluenced by any proselyting spirit, let those converted unite where they choose to worship God, and enjoy the ordinances of religion. This course will be best for the prosperity of religion generally ; best for the prosperity of the individual churches.

When Christians decline in effort and prayer for the conversion of sinners, and cease to appreciate the grace of God in leading sinners to Christ, then the work of God is hindered. Says Dr. Humphrey, "Christians are in danger when a revival has continued for some time, of praying less for its continuance, and of being less thankful for it. They seem to take it for granted that it will go on as a matter of course ; their prayers grow less frequent and fervent, and their gratitude less lively, until at length a case of conversion, which would at first have electrified the whole church, produces scarcely any sensation at all. Now when this is the case, a revival will certainly cease ; for God never continues to bestow spiritual favors where they are not felt to be such."

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#### POSSIBLE RESULTS OF REVIVALS.

ACCOMPANIED by such influences of the Holy Spirit as it is in times of revival, the Gospel is adequate to the complete reformation of society. This fact needs to be

impressed upon the minds of God's people. For notwithstanding all the wonders of God's grace, unbelief, in reference to the Gospel as the great reformatory power, still lingers in the church. But through the Gospel, God will create all things new.

In revivals of religion, those in ordinary times hopeless are reached, reformed and made the trophies of God's grace. So it was in the early ages of Christianity. What power was manifest in connection with the word preached at Corinth in this respect! "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God." There was a genuine revival of religion attending the Apostles' labors in Corinth, and the vilest characters were renewed and sanctified. Multitudes of instances which have occurred in later times might be adduced to substantiate our position. But a few instances, taken from the account of the great revival in the North of Ireland, will suffice to show the reformatory power of the Gospel when accompanied by the Holy Spirit.

"In a village visited by the revival, we heard this statement given by a rough young man. His fellow-workers, his overseer, the manager and proprietor of

the establishment where he worked, were all present. He said in substance, 'Friends, I need not tell you what I was; you all know me: you know I was a curser, a drunkard, a cock-fighter, a dog-fighter, a card-player, and all that was bad. I often played cards on Sunday, and sometimes slept with them under my head for fear my father would take them away. When this work begun I mocked it. I did not care whether it was from God or the devil, but I mocked it. One day I was passing such a one's door, (naming the person,) and I thought I would go in and see if there were any praying going on. But I had not been long there before I felt something, and thought I had been too long. Then I went away up to some of my comrades here, and I swore a great oath against their souls, and asked them if they would not come and hear that praying, the most wonderful they ever heard in their lives. But they would not come. Then I swore another oath, against my own soul, and said I would go down and hear that praying. I had not been there long before I felt I had been there too long, and I was wanting to go away. But I could not go away. Something kept me, and then the Lord struck me. O, friends, it was dreadful! I was in a horrible pit. All my sins were brought before my eyes. I could not get rid of them. They were all there; and the cards, and especially them I had played on Sunday. Oh, it was terrible! And I was this way for one or two days; and then the Lord had mercy on me, and took away my sins, and made my soul happy; and O, I have been so happy ever since. And so, friends, take warning by me.'"

But it is the general results which show plainly that revivals of religion may be productive of a complete reformation in society. "It is already early," says the London Review, "to expect results traceable in this manner, but they are forthcoming. In the town of Belfast, the great distillery of Mackenzie, capable of producing twelve hundred thousand gallons of whiskey a year, is advertised to be sold. In the town of Hillsborough another distillery is in the same position. At the late sessions in Belfast, the cases for trial have been just half as many as at the same period last year. In the town of Ballymena, where one hundred and twenty public houses flourished among a population of only six thousand, and consequently broils, immoralities and misdemeanors were of great frequency, at the late quarter sessions four cases only were on the calendar. The presiding barrister said that while it was no part of his duty to enter into the causes leading to this wonderful change, he was called upon to congratulate the jury on the elevation in the morals of the people which it indicated. The clerk of the petty sessions for the same town says the consumption of spirits is not one half what it was this time last year, and the petty feuds and quarrels have diminished fifty per cent. At Crumlin, no less than nine publicans declined at the sessions to renew their licenses, and six others stated that they must obtain renewal simply because they had stock on hand of which they could not dispose without a license, and that there was no prospect of their continuing in the business. In Coleraine the head of the constabu-

lary states that offences connected with drunkenness have fallen from twelve to twenty in the fortnight down to three or four, and that indecent language and profane swearing are now unheard in the streets.

“In the parish of Connor, where the revival begun more than two years ago, and where its course for eighteen months was silent and tranquil, the following facts are now attested: Out of nine public houses, two are closed by the conversion of the publicans, and a third for want of trade. The six now open do not sell more whiskey than one did before the revival began. In the year 1857 they had in that parish thirty-seven committals for offences connected with drunkenness; in 1858 eleven, and throughout the present year only four, and of these, two were strangers to the parish. This seals the former statement as to the amount of business done by the public houses still open, and prepares the way for another about pauperism. In 1857 they had twenty-seven paupers in the union, now only four; then the poor rates were one shilling to the pound, now they are six pence.

“What do these figures represent? How many disorderly lives reclaimed! How many miserable homes made comfortable! How many demoralizing gatherings supplanted by edifying meetings! How many scenes of wretchedness changed for those of penitence, worship and domestic peace! How many sick beds untended, uncomforted and unblest, for those which are solaced by prayer and praise and hope in God!

“A great, a manifest, a wonderful change has passed



upon a large section of the British population in a single year—a change fraught with blessings to individuals, happiness to families, advantage to the state, and honor to the Christian church. That change is well summed up by Mr. James Grant in his personal visit :

“Nothing but Almighty power ever could accomplish such complete changes in human character as those which are hourly witnessed. The drunkard gives up his habits of inebriety, and the swearer ceases to take the name of his Maker in vain. He who was addicted to the utterance of falsehood, speaks the truth and nothing but the truth. The man who stole, steals no more ; and he who delighted in every thing that resembled the savage nature of the tiger, becomes gentle and harmless as a lamb. Men who ill-treated their wives, and acted unnaturally toward their children, are suddenly and as if by miraculous agency, transformed into the best of husbands and the kindest of fathers. Crime, in a word, has become comparatively unknown. The police constables have little or nothing to do, and the sessions and assizes, where offences against the law are tried, and if convicted punished, have hardly any cases before them. The aspect of society in the districts where the revival has most decidedly progressed, has, in a word, undergone so thorough a change that no one could believe it who has not been an eye witness of it, seen it with his own eyes, and heard the wonderful things with his own ears.”

Philosophers say that there is nothing incredible in the statement that this earth should be burned up.

Why? Because chemistry shows that it can all be resolved into elements which are inflammable. Then is there any thing incredible that a revival should pervade the world, which shall work universal reform, when we find that under the operation of the truth and Spirit of God every description of evil disappears?

What lessons are we to derive from this view? Not to make less effort to remove by other means the evils which exist. Whatever evil is done away, and by whatever means, it is a good thing. Suppose, for example, we desire the removal of intemperance: let us labor to get as many as possible to adopt and practice the principles of temperance. In the train of such efforts a revival may spring up, bringing blessings to those who have reformed, and carrying reform through all those who could not be reached by other means. But if all other means fail, the Word and Spirit of God can work reform.

Another lesson is to hope for great things, labor for great things, and pray for great things. The Lord is able to subdue all things to himself. We need a greatly enlarged faith in reference to the power of the truth of God when followed by the prayers of his people, and accompanied with the spirit of grace. In this direction the church believes too little, attempts too little, and prays for too little.

Another lesson is that lukewarmness and unbelief, and inactivity in the church, are exceedingly great evils. In consequence of these, vice stalks abroad, and souls ripen for destruction.

#### PART IV.

### PERSONAL ACTIVITY AND EFFORT.

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#### FORWARD.

“Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward.”

Nor unfrequently is the church brought into straits. Such was the case when Moses cried unto God. A mighty foe, bent on her destruction, was rapidly approaching in the rear. On either side rose rugged and impassable mountains. In front were the devouring waves of the sea. But her appropriate work was to go forward. In her attempts to do this, God granted her a glorious deliverance. “Why criest thou unto me? Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward.” When they began to move on, God was ready to do what their necessities required. At the command of Moses, the host of God’s elect advanced. They stepped into the waters of the Red Sea, and behold, the waters rose up like mountains on either side, and thus made a highway for them to pass over. Their enemies pursued them while thus engaged in their appropriate work, but the hand of the Lord rolled back the waters upon them. They sank, both the horsemen and the chariot, like lead in the mighty waters. The deliverance of the church was complete. “Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward.” From front to rear, and back again from rear to front, the word was *Onward!*

Otherwise no deliverance would have come from on high. The glories of that deliverance, and all the sublime instructions it gave to the church and the world would have been lost.

And how was it in the apostles' days? Being commanded not to speak nor to teach in the name of Jesus, they replied, "We can not but speak the things which we have seen and heard." They went preaching everywhere with all boldness. The kingdom of Satan crumbled under their repeated blows. Light penetrated the darkness of superstition and false religion, converts daily multiplied and associated themselves together for the perpetuation of the gospel. And so far as the establishment of the gospel was concerned, the apostles completely triumphed over all their foes. Never would this have been the case had they not, amid all difficulties, moved forward in their appropriate work.

The prayers of the leaders of the church will never avail unless the church go forward. The measure of the prosperity of the church is her activity. This is true, not only because activity is essential to life and progress, but because it is essential to the enjoyment of God's presence and help. Only as the church goes forward, does the Red Sea open before her, and the songs of victory and triumph resound through her ranks.

The writer once knew a feeble church, composed of only thirty members. They were surrounded with wickedness and infidelity. But they repented of their backslidings. They confessed their sins one to another, and prayed one for another. They consulted God's

word. They visited the closet. They became faithful in family religion. They exhorted one another daily. They assembled themselves together for prayer. They engaged in personal efforts to save souls. They let their light shine. God blessed them. He added scores to their numbers, and gave them strength and beauty. It is not without, that exists any thing the church has to fear. If there is aught that betokens ill to her, it is her want of faith and activity.

No heart can conceive what blessings would descend upon the church, what displays of divine power would be made in her behalf, if she would awake from her slumbers and unitedly go forward in her appropriate work as the Israelites went through the Red Sea.

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TRY.

THERE must be a beginning to efforts to do good. That beginning to the life of usefulness which follows, is often as the rill that runs down the mountain's side is to the mighty river which sweeps with majestic tide into the ocean. Many possess talents for usefulness of which they are not conscious, because they never put forth any efforts to do good. Those who have been the greatest blessings to their fellow men, have commenced their career of usefulness in some little act of benevolence or labor of love. They have thus commenced a career which has led them on to eminence. Trying, opens the door to usefulness. The mind itself is quickened and impelled to an onward course by trying to ac-

comply something. I have stood on a dam, behind which was a motionless body of water. I have opened a gate in that dam, and behold, the waters leaped forth and run through valley and mead, spreading beauty and fertility, and propelling useful machinery as they rushed along. The powers of the mind are like that body of water. Trying to do good is opening the gate. When that is done, those powers leap forth and scatter blessings in their train. The redeemed will look back to the hour when they decided to try to effect something for God, with a joy second only to that with which they look back to the hour when they gave their hearts to God.

Mr. Raikes used to relate an anecdote, that when he was revolving in his mind the practicability of establishing a school on Sunday, the word *try* was so powerfully impressed on his mind as to decide him at once for action. And he remarked, "I can never pass by the spot where the word 'try' came so powerfully into my mind, without lifting up my hands and heart to heaven in gratitude to God for having put such a thought into my heart."

It is only as people try to work in the vineyard of the Lord, that they receive grace to help. When they engage in the work which God has given them to do, he bestows upon them the grace which qualifies them for that work. "As thy day is, thy strength shall also be."

A student in college, who had expressed a hope in Christ, enlisted in the work of tract distribution. The visitation of a certain section of the city where he re-

sided was assigned him. He went to one corner of the square, and looked towards a house, but felt that he could not enter and leave his tract. Thus he went along and looked at every house in the district he was appointed to visit. But he felt that he could never make the visitation. He walked away into a field, and in the shade of a spreading oak he knelt and cried unto God for strength and grace to do his will. He went back. Still oppressed with weakness and fear, he entered the first house he came to, offered his tract, and engaged in prayer. It was then that the needed grace was imparted. More abundantly was it experienced as he went forward. Before completing the visitation of his district, he felt as if he could go to every house in the city, leave his little messenger, speak a word of exhortation, and call upon God to bless the people. He became very active and efficient in this kind of labor, and attributed his usefulness to a resolution in the strength of God to try to do something in his cause.

“At the close of a Sabbath evening, and at one of his Bible class examinations, a pastor in the north of Ireland was heard addressing a young man present, and affectionately urging upon him the duty of doing something more for God. ‘Could you not,’ said he, ‘gather at least six of your careless neighbors, either parents or children, to your house, and spend an hour with them in teaching and searching the word of God?’ The young man hesitated for a moment, but promised to try. From that trial, made in faith, originated the Tannybrake Sabbath school. And in connection with it, two

years subsequently, a prayer meeting, which yielded some of the first fruits of the great awakening."

Christian brethren, God has endowed you with faculties for action. He has given you a work to do. If you fail to accomplish it, fail not to try. Say not that you can not make high attainments in piety, that you can not stir up your fellow-Christians to activity and zeal, that you can not do any thing by personal effort to win souls, but *try*. As long as there is any thing to be done in the community around you to save souls from death, try to do it. Will you *try*?

"Children, those of you who will bring new scholars to school, shall be rewarded with some nice books," said the superintendent of a Sunday school to his scholars, one Sunday. 'I can't get any new scholars,' said several of the children to themselves. 'I'll try what I can do,' said one little boy. He went right home to his father, and said, 'Father, will you go to Sabbath school with me?' 'I can't read, my son,' said the father, with a look of shame. 'Our teacher will teach you, dear father,' said he, in a respectful and affectionate manner. 'Well, I'll go,' said the father. He went, he learned to read, he became a Christian. Then he felt so much interested in the Sunday school cause, that he engaged himself as a Sunday school colporteur, and in four years that man had established four hundred Sunday schools, into which thirty-five thousand children had been gathered. Only think of all this amount of good resulting from one little boy resolving 'I'll try what I can do.'"



## PERSONAL EFFORT.

THE idea of personal effort seems happily expressed by the prophet Jeremiah. "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know me from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord." The thing here alluded to, is universal personal effort—every child of God seeking by personal conversation to win his neighbor to Christ. This is to be one grand instrumentality of ushering in the millennium. In this work every Christian should be engaged so long as there are any around him who know not the Lord. The next event after this shall be the case, will be the universal knowledge of the Lord among men.

Personal effort to save the lost is essential to the exercise of that love which is enjoined in the gospel. Who can love his neighbor and make no effort for his salvation? Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost. Without His spirit we are none of his. But His spirit abiding in any man would lead him to say to his brother and to his neighbor, Know the Lord. The feelings of a soul which has tasted the grace of God, seem well expressed by the poet in his conception of the blind man restored to sight:

"Now methinks I hear him praising,  
Publishing to all around ;  
Friends, is not my case amazing,  
What a Saviour I have found ?  
O, that all the blind but knew Him,  
And would be advised by me,  
Surely they would hasten to Him,  
He would cause them all to see."

Suppose that one in the wilderness who had been bitten by the fiery flying serpent, was healed by looking at the brazen serpent which Moses had lifted up. On his right hand and on his left he beholds his brothers and sisters and acquaintance writhing in pain and ready to die from the wounds inflicted by the poisonous serpent. Would he not entreat them to look at that object which had saved him? Where would be his love for them if he bore no testimony of what he had experienced by looking at the brazen serpent, and made no effort to induce them to look and be saved? But as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so was the Son of Man lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life. On every side souls are perishing in their sins. Where is your love to them if you make no effort to induce them to look to Christ for salvation?

It appears the duty of Christians to labor personally to save others, because it is enjoined upon them in the gospel. "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come." "But exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." "And of some have compassion, making a difference: and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire." "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death and shall hide a multitude of sins." "Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servants

whom I have chosen." The people of Jerusalem were to bear witness that Jehovah was God, because they had experienced that he could do for men what no pretended God could do. The Christian is for the same cause to witness for God. He has experienced the power of Christ to save. And in addition to all this, all Christians are included in the great commission, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." No Christian is engaged in work unappointed who labors directly for the salvation of men. This is a part of the work to which every Christian is called as a laborer in the vineyard of the Lord.

It is the duty of every Christian to engage in personal effort to save souls; to say to his brother and to his neighbor, "Know the Lord;" because without this instrumentality the church can not answer the end of her institution, to be the salt of the earth. If religion is a reality, it would seem naturally to follow, that those who experience it should recommend it to others. Where Christians fail to be witnesses for Christ, other means are in a great measure shorn of their power. But where people in large masses wake up to any great interest, the attention of large numbers is arrested, and great results are brought to pass. When the wall about the city of Jerusalem was completed by the returned captives, notwithstanding all the opposition which had attended the enterprise, one single phrase explained how it was done. "For the people had a mind to work." Look over the various churches

of our land, and where you find that on the surrounding population the Gospel has had its proper effect, where the vicious have been reclaimed, the ignorant enlightened, the young cared for and instructed, and sinners converted to Christ, you may explain it in the same way. "For the people had a mind to work." And where you do not find such a state of things, the lamentable fact is, the people have not had a mind to work. The state of things is the result of what the people have done or neglected to do. Personal effort by the church generally, is the great thing needed, and the only thing needed in addition to what already exists, to give prosperity and triumph to the cause of God, and save sinners from impending ruin. And this is needed. It must be had, or little will be accomplished in thousands of instances where churches exist and ministers labor. For want of this the hearts of ministers languish, and churches fail of usefulness. Every period of prosperity in the church has been characterized by the spirit of personal effort on the part of her members to win sinners to Christ. Never did the church accomplish more, according to her numbers, in turning sinners to God, than during the first century of her existence, and never were her members more active in personal efforts to save sinners. Wherever the early Christians were scattered abroad, they preached Christ. And the Lord added to them continually of such as should be saved. "In an exceedingly short period the Gospel was planted throughout the whole Roman empire. We can dis-

cover no means employed to accomplish this result but proclaiming to all men repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, imposing on every regenerated man the duty in turn of proclaiming the good news to others, always relying, and relying wholly on the power of the Holy Ghost." And later times have shown that the hiding of the Saviour's power is in the personal fidelity of every one, and each one of his disciples. In "The Power of Prayer" is the following language: "Men have been surprised at the success of a little labor, and this has encouraged more labor. One man has gone prayerfully and affectionately to another, and urged the importance of the hour, the space given him for repentance, and the necessity of improving it to make his peace with God. When he goes to him the second time he finds him in great anxiety of mind. He asks, What must I do, what can I do to be saved? He finds that sleep has departed from him. His days are restless, and nights bring him no repose. What is the matter with the man? Why nothing, except from his knees a man has gone and spoken to him in an unexpected moment, with unexpected earnestness, with unwonted emotion, and with irresistible tenderness and love has besought him to attend to the gospel message, as a sinner needing an interest in Christ." This is all of instrumentality, and God has owned it. Such instrumentality God will own. To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin. Who can not say to his neighbor and to his brother, Know the Lord? and God may bless the word.

“A youthful minister, now a missionary, was once, at the close of a funeral service, sitting next to a young lady who was apparently altogether careless about religion. He inquired of the stranger if she were a Christian. She replied, ‘No, I am not.’ Deeply interested in her spiritual welfare, he again asked, ‘Why not?’ She had thought there might be reasons for her becoming a Christian; what reasons there were for her continuing impenitent, she had never considered. She gave herself a living sacrifice to her Saviour, and is now telling in a foreign land the story of His love.”

In a revival of religion in one of our western cities, a church found themselves with scarcely any unconverted persons attending worship with them. They formed themselves into a committee of the whole, to go out into the streets and lanes of the city and to persuade sinners to come to their meetings. They then commenced a morning prayer meeting and an evening meeting for preaching. Some were brought in daily who had not attended before, and who had been living in the habit of neglecting the means of grace. As the result, upwards of eighty were hopefully converted and united with the church. Besides, the church was nearly doubled in strength by the efforts put forth. Let the church generally engage in personal effort, and she will fulfill her mission. Christ will be in the midst of her, and from her will go forth streams of salvation to the perishing around her.

## MOTIVES TO PERSONAL EFFORT.

It is for the Christian's own advancement in holiness and happiness, to make personal effort for the salvation of others. Our progress depends upon the exercise of our faculties. By attempts to do good to others, our benevolent feelings are called into exercise and thus strengthened. Besides, the more abundantly Christians labor in His vineyard, the more plentifully does God bestow his grace upon them. It is when they are disposed to use all that they have in the service of God, to improve every opportunity to do good, that great grace is bestowed upon them.

“How benign would be the influence of a faithful discharge of this duty upon the personal piety of Christians! It would keep in habitual exercise the most pure and elevated class of benevolent emotions. It would keep the truth in its most effecting bearings and relations constantly before the mind, and create a powerful sense of obligation to lead daily a holy life. It would exceedingly increase the happiness of Christians. They have for the most part but little religious enjoyment, because they do so little to save others, and, of course, have so little scope for prayer and for the exercise of benevolent feelings. Let them but abound in this work of love, and their hearts will be enlarged in prayer and praise, and they will thus find new evidence of their conformity to God. What fact is better known than that those have been most blessed of God who have labored most for the good of others? So God long ago declared it should be. “The liberal soul

shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered also himself."

The late venerable Andrew Fuller said once to a friend: "There was a period in my ministry when most of my people were in a very desponding state of mind. The more I tried to comfort them, the more they complained of doubts and depressions. They dragged on heavily in the way toward heaven. One common lamentation met my ear: 'Ah, sir, I can not appropriate any of the great and precious promises to myself.' I looked for light and I beheld darkness. I knew not," said Mr. Fuller, "what to do nor what to think. At this time our attention was directed to the claims of the perishing heathen in India. My people were aroused and interested. They set out with earnestness and zeal in this new department of Christian usefulness. They did what they could, and while thus engaged, their lamentations ceased. The sad became cheerful, the desponding calm, and I, instead of having to comfort my flock, was myself comforted by them. God blessed them when they tried to be a blessing." The same will be the case with Christians when they take hold in earnest of the work of saving the perishing around them.

Another motive to personal effort consists in the glorious results secured by it.

When the Saviour was at the well, there was before him a single individual, obscure and of little influence. But He conversed with her. She was converted. Her conversion occasioned the awakening of a large



number of her neighbors, who came flocking to Christ as clouds and as doves to their windows. The apparent results of this conversation were greater than those of any sermon preached or of any miracle wrought by Him. A word spoken to an individual may be the means of leading that individual to inquire, What must I do to be saved? The influence of that inquiry may stir up the church, and awaken the impenitent, and thus a work of grace may spring up which may bring blessings to thousands of hearts. In regard to opportunities to do good, no one should despise the day of small things. A mother takes her child into the closet and kneels down, and there commends it to God, and tells it of a Saviour's love. That child in consequence becomes a Christian. It then speaks a word to some hardened sinner, who turns to God, and thus commences a revival which spreads over towns, and counties, and states.

The following instance occurred under the observation of the writer. In a certain town in the west, were a few devoted Christians and a godly minister. But the town was overrun with error, and the church were discouraged. The minister was afflicted by feebleness of health, if not occasioned, increased by despondency at the low state of Zion. About six miles distant was a Theological Seminary. One of the young men there preparing for the ministry felt a deep interest for this town. He resolved to see what could be done by personal effort for the cause of religion there. He devoted the Saturday of each week to

the religious visitation of the people there, and assisted the pastor in the Saturday evening prayer meeting. He continued this course, calling upon every family, conversing, praying, and leaving a tract where it was practicable. He found that his own love and faith and enjoyment in prayer were continually increasing. Before he had completed the visitation of the town he found some seriousness among the people. On the evening of the day in which he finished his visitation, a young clergyman whom he had invited attended the prayer meeting with him. A deep solemnity pervaded the assembly. It was manifest that God was there. And when opportunity was given before the closing prayer, for any who wished to signify their desire for an interest in the prayers of God's people, ten arose, among whom were the leading opposers of religion. A revival followed, which spread through the town, and brought over a hundred into the church. Thus was the church not only brought out of a state of dependence and weakness, but so strengthened as to be able to give a liberal support to their minister, and also to contribute to the benevolent movements of the age.

Personal effort on a large scale has preceded all the great revivals which have blessed our land in later times. A great revival pervaded many portions of our land in 1857. In a work entitled "The Power of Prayer," is the following statement in reference to New York :

"So far as this city was concerned, the organized systems of tract and Sunday school visitation had much to do with the beginning of the revival, with its spread,

and with its continuance to the present hour. The latter part of last year a more thorough system was resolved upon, of searching out and exploring the destitutions of this great city, and inducing the neglected and neglecting perishing thousands to attend to the worship of God, and to send their children to the Sabbath school. It was determined to push this plan of visitation into the fashionable avenues as well as into the highways and hedges of the city. The number was greatly increased of those who visited the house of prayer. All denominations nearly were benefited by this work, and many of them shared in the labor of it.

If all Christians would devote themselves to this work, and so illustrate religion in their lives, what a change in the state of mankind would speedily take place! There is moral energy enough in the church, if only developed, to convert at once, by Divine aid, this whole nation; it ought to be fully developed, but it never will be till the duty of personal effort is faithfully and universally performed. Let Christians generally engage in personal effort with the faith and zeal which characterized Harlan Page, and salvation would flow down our streets like a river. When such shall be the case, the light of the millennial morning will dissipate the darkness which has so long brooded over the nations. A letter from a young clergyman says, "the name of Harlan Page will ever be associated in my mind with all that is worthy of imitation in the Christian character. By the persuasions of an acquaintance, I was persuaded to engage as a teacher in his

Sabbath school, and though I was destitute of faith, he welcomed me, and won my confidence and love. Very soon he began to address me with the utmost tenderness in reference to my own salvation. His words sank deep into my heart. They were strange words; for, though I had lived among professors of religion, he was the first who, for nine or ten years, had taken me by the hand and kindly asked me, Are you a Christian? Do you intend to be a Christian? Why not now? Each succeeding Sabbath brought him to me with anxious inquiry after my soul's health. On the third or fourth Sabbath he gave me the tract, 'The Way to be Saved,' which deepened my impressions. At his request I also attended a teacher's meeting, conducted by him, where my soul was bowed down and groaned under the load of my guilt. At the close of the meeting, Mr. Page took my arm as we proceeded on our way to our respective homes, and urged upon me the duty and the privilege of an immediate surrender of my heart to Christ. As we were about to part, he held my hand, and at the corner of the street, in a wintry night, stood pleading with me to repent of sin and submit my heart to God. I returned to my home, and for the first time in many years bowed my knees in my chamber before God, and entered into a solemn covenant to serve him henceforth in and through the Gospel of his Son."

Says the Chr. Chronicle, "We want a lay ministry, so baptized in the Holy Spirit that each shall say, Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel. We want this work-

ing element in our churches, created by the spirit of all grace. We do not lack for sermons in our pulpits. We lack for sermons by the fireside and the wayside, in our shops and counting-houses, in our streets and alleys, in our business, on the farm, and among our merchandise. Oncken began in Germany in 1835 with seven members. In 1860 he had fifty churches, four hundred out-stations, and ten thousand members. How is this? Because all the members are workers. The Karen Missions are on this plan, and where shall we look for such missionary success?" We want workers.

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#### HOW CHRISTIANS SHOULD CONVERSE WITH THE IMPENITENT.

CHRISTIANS should converse with sinners when they have a particular impression upon their minds that it is their duty to do so. Some have such impressions, and still do not go and seek out and converse with the person as they are thus called to do. This ought not so to be. People who have followed out such impressions, have found generally that God has prepared the way before them, or at least blessed their efforts. A good deacon once felt impressed that he ought to go and converse with an acquaintance who was living in the entire neglect of public worship, and, of course, of all attention to the interests of his soul. After long struggling against this call to duty, he at length attended to it. He talked faithfully to the man, who not only received him kindly, but seemed much

affected by the interest manifested in his welfare.' The next Sabbath this man was at the house of God with his family. Before many months had passed he was a communicant in the church. He taught his children the ways of the Lord, and they all became pious. Instances of this kind are not uncommon.

Still we must caution Christians against the principle of conversing only when they have such an impression, and only with those to whom it leads them to converse. Such impressions should be used as a special encouragement to labor in particular instances. But Christians should not wait for them, and feel that they can do no good only as they are thus led. It is as great a mistake to refuse to labor without these impressions as it is to refuse to follow them. It is often the case that Christians do good in conversing with those to whom their attention has not been called in this manner. The Gospel is for every creature, and Christians are to do good to all men as they have opportunity. While, then, you labor with special encouragement for some, labor, despairing of none.

Christians should converse with the impenitent if possible when alone. There is a disposition in the unrenewed heart to be ashamed of Christ. Many have resisted the Spirit through fear of what others would say and think of them if they were known to be serious. Hence, when conversed with upon the subject of religion, the tendency is for them to brace themselves against the truth, and to endeavor to leave the impression upon the minds of others that they care

for none of these things. Hence it is often the case, that a word spoken in the presence of others to the impenitent does them an injury, whereas the same word spoken when they were alone, might have resulted in saving-good.

“There was a pious woman who kept a boarding-house for young gentlemen. She had twenty-one or two of them in her family, and at length became very anxious for their salvation. She made it a subject of prayer, but saw no seriousness among them. At length she saw there must be something done besides praying, but she did not know what to do. One morning after breakfast, as they were retiring, she asked one of them to stop a few minutes. She took him to her room and conversed with him tenderly on the subject of religion, and prayed with him. She followed up the impression made, and pretty soon he was hopefully converted. Then there were two, and they addressed another and prayed with him, and soon he was prepared to join them. Then another, and so on, taking one at a time, and letting none of the rest know what was going on, so as not to alarm them, till every one of these young men were converted to God. Now, if she had brought the subject before the whole of them together, they would very likely have turned it all into ridicule, or perhaps they would have been offended, and left the house, and then she could have had no further influence over them. But taking one alone, and treating him respectfully and kindly, he had no such motive for resistance as arises out of the presence of others.”

• Christians should go to converse with the impenitent with the expectation of being kindly treated, and favorably received by them. In most instances, sinners who are properly approached, receive the visitation of Christians as an expression of good-will, and gladly converse with them upon religious matters. I believe, in communities where Christ is preached, there are a hundred who are pleased to have Christians call to converse with them, where there is one offended by it. Besides, there are generally in every place, some who feel the need of counsel and sympathy upon religious subjects, and who are wishing for conversation upon them. They have long desired it, but have not had the confidence to speak to any one. Christians should, therefore, put away that backwardness which arises from a feeling that they shall not be favorably received if they converse with sinners. The backwardness of Christians to converse with the impenitent, and the unreasonableness of it, is illustrated by the following anecdote :

“A Christian minister in Yorkshire had long felt convinced of his sinfulness in neglecting to converse on spiritual topics with a beloved child. She was brought to the verge of the grave, and was, in his apprehension, still unconverted. His feelings were distressing, for he felt forcibly the importance of his duty in apprising her of her danger ; but till nearly her dying hour he continued to experience the backwardness he had long felt. Repeatedly did he enter her room to address her, and, unwilling to add the weight of



parental anxiety to her bodily affliction, he as often retired without accomplishing his object. His conscience pained him, for he feared that his misjudging fondness might contribute to her eternal ruin.

“At length, after repeated petitions for Divine assistance, he once more approached her bed, and pressing her hand, said in broken accents, ‘Has an eternal state, my dearest daughter, ever engaged your attention?’ This was all he could utter. To his astonishment and joy she immediately replied, ‘Yes, father; under a sermon that you preached from Romans 3d, upon man’s lost condition, I was convinced that I was in a state of condemnation. Since that time I have been unable to procure any consolation, and fear I shall be lost forever. Her tears for some time prevented her from saying more; but when able to proceed, she told him that she had long desired to make known to him the state of her mind. Overcome at this unexpected answer, he endeavored to convince her of the certainty of salvation to all who, conscious of their depravity, confide in the merits of the Redeemer for acceptance with God. Her distress continued for two days longer, when, resting on Christ, every degree of gloom was removed, and she was favored for fifteen days with holy peace and joy. Christ was increasingly precious to her, and her father had the blessedness of witnessing her triumphant departure, in the full assurance of hope, in the fifteenth year of her age.”

## SINNERS SHOULD BE CONVERSED WITH TENDERLY.

PAUL besought men day and night with tears. A heart deeply sensible of the fearful condition of sinners, and yearning for their salvation, is an important preparation to profitable conversation with them. A real concern for sinners should impel us to go forth and entreat them to be reconciled to God.

“R——, the blacksmith, was an infidel and scoffer; was a man of extensive reading, and master of all the ablest infidel writers. He possessed a ready wit, and when he could not talk his opponent down, he would laugh him down. The pastor had often approached him, and had as often been repulsed. As a last resort, he had requested his able and skillful neighbor, a lawyer of piety and talents, to visit Mr. R——, and endeavor to convince him. But it was like attempting to reason with the tempest, or soothe the volcano.

“The following was the manner of his conversion, as related by himself in a prayer meeting:

“‘I stand,’ said Mr. R——, ‘to tell you the story of my conversion.’ His lips trembled slightly as he spoke, and his bosom heaved with suppressed emotion. ‘I am as a brand plucked out of the burning. The change in me is astonishing to myself; and all brought about by the grace of God, and that *unanswerable argument*. It was a cold morning in January, and I had just begun my labor at the anvil in my shop, when I looked out and saw Mr. B—— approaching. He dismounted quickly and entered. As he drew near, I saw he was

agitated. His look was full of earnestness. His eyes were bedimmed with tears. He took me by the hand. His breast heaved with emotion, and with indescribable tenderness he said, ‘Mr. R——, I am greatly concerned for your salvation—greatly concerned for your salvation;’ and he burst into tears. He stood with my hand grasped in his. He struggled to regain self-possession. He often essayed to speak, but not a word could he utter; and finding that he could say no more, he turned, went out of the shop, got on his horse, and rode slowly away.

“‘Greatly concerned for my salvation,’ said I, audibly, and I stood and forgot to bring my hammer down. There I stood with it upraised.—‘Greatly concerned for my salvation!’

“‘I went to the house. My poor, pious wife, whom I had always ridiculed for her religion, exclaimed, ‘Why, Mr. R——, what is the matter with you?’ Matter enough, said I, filled with agony and overwhelmed with a sense of sin. Old Mr. B—— has ridden two miles this cold morning to tell me he was greatly concerned for my salvation. What shall I do? what shall I do?’

“‘I do not know what you can do,’ said my astonished wife; ‘I do not know what better you can do than to get on your horse, and go and see him. He can give you better counsel than I, and tell you what you must do to be saved.’

“‘I mounted my horse, and pursued after him. I found him alone in that same little room where he had spent the night in prayer for my poor soul, where he

had shed many tears over such a reprobate as I, and had besought God to have mercy on me.

“‘I am come,’ said I to him, ‘to tell you that I am greatly concerned for my own salvation.’

“‘Praised be God!’ said the aged man, ‘It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, even the chief;’ and he began at that same Scripture, and preached to me Jesus. On that same floor we knelt, and together we prayed—and we did not separate that day till God spoke peace to my soul.

“‘I have often been requested to look at the evidence of the truth of religion, but blessed be God, I have evidence of its truth here,’ laying his hand upon his heart, ‘which nothing can gainsay or resist. I have often been led to look at this and that argument for Christianity; but I could overturn, and, as I thought, completely demolish and annihilate them all. But I stand here to-night, thankful to acknowledge that God sent *an argument* to my conscience and heart, which could not be answered or resisted, when a weeping Christian came to tell me how greatly concerned he was for my salvation. God taught him that *argument*, when he spent the night before him in prayer for my soul.’”

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CONTROVERSY SHOULD BE AVOIDED IN CONVERSATION  
WITH SINNERS.

You may argue with a man holding erroneous opinions, and he will stand more firmly committed to his

opinions. He does not like to own himself vanquished. But if, avoiding all controversy, you advocate the truth, it may reach his heart. In "Thoughts of Favored Hours," Mr. Joseph Copley relates the following anecdote of Rev. Hermon Norton, late Corresponding Secretary of the American and Foreign Christian Union. It shows how one short sentence from the lips of the Saviour has greater power over the prejudices and errors of the human heart than the most elaborate arguments of the most gifted minds. "Rev. Mr. N——, in his missionary travel through the western part of New York, came to a village where there was a society of Universalists, whose preacher was a man of great zeal and earnestness. He tried various expedients to draw Mr. N—— into a debate; but the latter avoided him. One day, however, they met by accident, and were introduced to each other. The Universalist would not let the opportunity slip. "Well, Mr. N——," said he, "I am one of those who hold that all will be saved."

"I am aware of that," said Mr. N——.

"And I think I can convince you that the doctrine is true," said the Universalist.

"I will hear you," said Mr. N——.

The other then entered upon the usual arguments in support of such views, receiving an attentive hearing from Mr. N——, until he had said all that he wished to.

"I have but one answer to make to all that," said Mr. N——, looking him steadily in the face.

"Well, sir, what is it?" said the Universalist.

"Except you repent you will perish."

This reply sorely nonplused the other. He complained that Mr. N—— had not met the case ; but being assured by the latter that he had nothing else to say, he rallied and put forth some other arguments, being determined if possible to draw him out. Mr. N—— heard him quietly until he was through, and again said, “I have but one reply to make to all that.” The other paused to hear what it would be, when Mr. N—— solemnly repeated the awful words, “Except you repent you will perish.”

“Why,” said the wounded man, for the word of the Spirit had pierced him deeply, “you will not argue at all.” “I have nothing more to say,” quietly observed Mr. N——. After a short pause, the Universalist turned to leave the room. “Stop, my friend,” said Mr. N——, “I wish to say to you that there is one thing that you will not be able to forget.” “What is it, sir?” he asked. “Except you repent, you will lose your soul.” A bitter smile of incredulity was the only reply to this last remark. Mr. N—— saw nothing more of him that day. On the following day the Universalist called upon Mr. N——, and expressed a desire to have more conversation. “No,” said the latter, “I do not wish any more conversation with you.” “Oh, sir,” said the other, “I have not come to argue with you ; you were right yesterday when you told me that there was one thing I would not be able to forget. I feel that it is true, that except I repent I must perish, and have come to ask you what I must do to be saved?” “My dear friend,” said Mr. N——, “if that be the way, I

shall be happy to talk with you as long as you please.” And they did talk together, and prayed together, and the result was that the Universalist became a happy believer and a preacher of the truth which he had previously labored to divert and destroy. Now, how plain it appears from this anecdote that the errors which lurk in the hearts of sinners are not to be dislodged by our logic or reasoning. In fact the votaries of error love to encounter us as this zealous Universalist sought to encounter Mr. N——. But they can not endure those living words which fell from the lips of Christ, who is ‘the way, the truth, and the life.’”

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CHRISTIANS SHOULD CONVERSE WITH THE IMPENITENT  
WITH THE HOPE OF THEIR CONVERSION.

It is true, many may not be savingly benefited by their efforts. But some will be in a state favorable to religious impressions, and seeking guidance in divine things. Others may be awakened by a word affectionately spoken, attended with the influences of the Holy Spirit. “A lady in New England, who was converted under Mr. Whitefield’s preaching, felt anxious to do good to the souls of others. Being so situated that she could not reach others, she took her little daughter into her closet and prayed with her. After a time it pleased God to give her the hope of salvation by the forgiveness of her sins. In a transport of joy she then exclaimed, ‘Oh, mother, if all the world knew this!—I wish I could tell every body. Pray, mother, let me run to

some of the neighbors, and tell them that they may be happy, and love my Saviour too.' 'Ah, my child,' said the mother, 'that would be useless, for I suppose that were you to tell your experience, there is not one within many miles who would not laugh at you, and say it was all delusion.' 'Oh, mother,' replied the dear girl, 'I think they would believe me. I will run over and tell the shoemaker.' She ran over and found him at work in his shop. She began to tell him that he must die, and that he was a sinner, and that she, too, was a sinner, but that her blessed Saviour had heard her mother's prayers, and had forgiven all her sins, and that now she was so happy she did not know how to tell it. The shoemaker was struck with surprise; his tears flowed down like rain; he threw aside his work, and by prayer and supplication sought for mercy. The neighborhood was awakened, and within a few months, more than fifty persons were brought to the knowledge of Jesus, and rejoiced in his power and grace."

A Christian brother once felt impelled to go and call upon an acquaintance, and say a word to him upon his eternal interests. He found him in his field at work. He congratulated him upon his pleasant situation and prospects, and after a few moments conversation in reference to his worldly affairs, he said, "Well, Isaac, it is necessary that some provision be made for the soul," and hastened away. "Necessary that some provision be made for the soul," said Isaac to himself, as his friend rode away. The words continued to ring in his ears, and he found no rest till he obtained a hope of salvation



through the blood of Christ. He afterwards became an active Christian and a deacon in the church. Through his personal efforts and prayers many were led to consecrate themselves to the service of Christ.

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CONVERSATION WITH SINNERS, WITH A VIEW TO THEIR CONVERSION TO GOD, SHOULD BE FOLLOWED BY EARN-EST, PERSEVERING PRAYER.

AN angel from Heaven might speak to a sinner, and use all his art of persuasion in vain to turn him to God. But by his Holy Spirit, God is able to set home a single word, a simple exhortation, so as to convict the sinner of sin, and lead him to cry with the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Those who go to converse with men to win them to God, should go from the closet, and if they go in a proper spirit of dependence they will return to the closet, and there plead with God in behalf of those for whom they have labored. Their conversation with sinners will enable them to pray with an interest and a definiteness for them which they could not otherwise have. They should enlist others to join with them in prayer for those with whom they have conversed.

"As I was coming to the meeting this morning," said the leader of the Fulton street prayer meeting, "I came through Washington market. I was told by a young man belonging to the market and doing business there, that the revival had reached some young men there of a particular class, and pulling out a list of names,

‘There,’ said he, ‘is a list whom we have been praying for in different circles of prayer. I have carried these around to the little meetings for prayer which we have had, and we have prayed for them one by one, and now all on this list are converted.’ And then, taking another list of names from his pocket, he said ‘Here is another list of names,’ and called my attention specially to it. There were nine on the list. ‘These,’ said he, ‘we are now praying for one by one, and we follow them up not only with our prayers, but with personal conversation, entreating them to become reconciled to God. He begged me to ask you to remember these nine young men in your prayers, and ask for their immediate conversion to God.’

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#### CHRISTIANS SHOULD WRITE TO OTHERS UPON THE SUBJECT OF RELIGION.

“I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation.”

Jude 3.

ALL means and opportunities for doing good should be improved. The apostles were diligent not only to speak to their fellow-men, but to write to them of the common salvation. It is important that Christians should imitate their example in this respect. If they would give all diligence to write to their friends and acquaintances of the common salvation, a vast amount of good would be accomplished.

It is often practical to improve a moment for the good of others, in writing, which could not be so im-

proved in speaking. Sometimes a word thus addressed will be received as more evidence of love to their souls than a word spoken to them would be. It is well, therefore, to address letters to those who have been conversed with. Besides, it is often difficult to find alone those whom you wish to address upon the subject of religion. Moreover, some have not the gift to speak to others, who can write to them of the common salvation. The obligation of such to labor in this way for the good of others, is imperative. In this manner the absent and the distant can be addressed. And this is one of the most suitable ways to present the claims of religion to familiar friends and connections. There is much need that this kind of effort should be employed for their good. How many professors have near and dear friends, for whose salvation they have never made any direct effort! Let them write tenderly and earnestly to such, and persuade them to attend to the things belonging to their peace. Labor of this kind will benefit their own souls. It will discharge a fearful responsibility. It will prepare them to meet their friends at the judgment.

Often have letters addressed to the impenitent been instrumental of awakening them and bringing them to the fold of Christ. Often, too, have Christians greatly benefited each other and the cause of Christ by written communications upon the subject of religion.

Let newly converted persons address letters to all their impenitent companions, testifying to them of the reality and blessedness of religion, and exhorting them to seek the great salvation. And when Christians are

pressing forward and enjoying the smiles of God, let them send letters of exhortation to their friends and acquaintance who are in a backslidden state. Let those who are enjoying refreshings from the presence of the Lord strengthen their brethren in other places, and stir them up to prayer and activity by writing to them of the wondrous works and faithfulness of God. In a word, let them use all diligence to write of the common salvation.

In a certain town in Connecticut the pastor was visited with sickness, and laid aside from all ministerial labors, except such as he could perform at his house. He could still talk and write some upon religious subjects. A little girl, about ten years of age, felt a deep sympathy for her pastor. During the summer months she often visited him and presented him with a bouquet of flowers which she had gathered from the garden or the field, or received from some of her neighbors. Her presence and flowers seemed to refresh his weary frame. His heart glowed with love for his little visitor, and he longed to do her some good. He improved the occasion of her visits to converse with her upon the subject of religion. He set before her the peculiar importance of youth as a season to seek the Saviour and prepare for heaven. He saw no fruit of these conversations. But he determined to make one more effort. He sat up to the table and wrote a letter, with all the tenderness and fidelity with which he was capable, sealed it and sent it to her. He said nothing about it to any one. But in a few days he heard a gentle knock at the door.

As it was opened, the little girl inquired, "Can I see our minister?" She was conducted into his room, and there left with him. "Dear pastor," said she, "I have felt very anxious since I read your letter. I have seen that I am a sinner, and have prayed to God to forgive and save me. But it seems as if there was no mercy for me." The pastor gave her instructions and prayed with her, and she retired. That night she retired to her closet and bowed before God. There she found peace to her soul. She immediately began to labor with her companions. One of them soon felt that it was time to seek the Saviour, and was persuaded to accompany her on a visit to the pastor. Thus sprung up a work of grace which resulted in the salvation of many souls.

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CHRISTIANS SHOULD MAKE IT THEIR LEADING OBJECT TO  
PROMOTE RELIGION WHEREVER THEY GO.

"Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word."—Acts, 8 : 4.

THE grand idea underlying this passage of Scripture is that wherever they go, wherever they move, it should be the leading object of Christians to promote the kingdom of Christ. This will be the case if they are constrained by the love of Christ.

If the Christian is going from home, to tarry in a place for a season for the prosecution of business, his first aim should be to promote the cause of Christ. As he may have opportunity he should be determined there to exert himself for the prosperity of religion. He should not

plead as an excuse for inactivity that he does not belong to that place, and so feels but little interest. Does not the place belong to the vineyard of his Master, in which he is to labor? It may be the last field of usefulness which he will be allowed to occupy, and he should there do with his might whatsoever his hand findeth to do in the service of Christ.

There is a sad deficiency among professed Christians in respect to this matter. Often a minister learns that a family is about to move into his parish to remain for a season, a number of whom are pious. He flatters himself that they will greatly assist him, and do much for the cause of religion. But, alas, he is mistaken. They perhaps attend meeting upon the Sabbath, and contribute a little to the support of the gospel. But this is the extent of what they do. They do not take upon themselves the responsibilities which they have been accustomed to, and which they think belong to those who are settled there and united with the local church. They do not take hold in prayer meetings, in Sabbath schools, or in any efforts to promote religion. This is often the case when they are in communities where the church is feeble, and Christian labor is greatly needed. Their course not only occasions the loss of their activity for the time being, but brings them into a state of declension, discourages others, and becomes a stumbling-block to the world. It is exceedingly sinful. The cause of Christ is the same in every place. The obligation of Christians to labor for its promotion are unceasing. They do not depend upon permanent residence in a

place, or connection with the local church. So the example of the primitive Christians teaches us. We do not deny that there are advantages in connection with the local church. It tends to bring Christians into more sympathy with each other, and facilitates their co-operation in efforts to do good. For these and other reasons it should be the practice of Christians to form such connection whenever they are to reside for any considerable time in a place. If Christians consult their highest usefulness as well as happiness, when they leave for good one place to reside in another, they will remove their church relations. If they go forth that they may serve God, they will take this step, though it may be trying to their feelings to break off their church relations with those to whom they have become attached. For they will be disposed to deny themselves, to do good. By uniting with the church where they remove, they will not only place themselves in a better position for labor in the vineyard of the Lord, but will encourage the pastor and the church there. Besides, they who desire wholly to follow the Lord, will feel that they need all the restraints and helps which church relations with those among whom they dwell afford. Hence as it regards fidelity and activity, we do not often hear a good report of such as long remain in a place without uniting with the church there.

In choosing the place of their abode, Christians ought to have their own spiritual improvement and their greatest usefulness first in their designs. In this matter, the question How and where can I do the most good,

should be examined by every Christian, and should decide his course. If it do not, where is his supreme love to Christ? There are multitudes of fields, both at home and abroad, where the presence of efficient laymen would be productive of great good; where, if they would consider the subject, they would feel called to go.

The result of carrying into practice what we have here advocated would be most desirable.

We should not hear so much of Christians losing their piety by removing from one place to another. The pilgrim fathers came to these shores that they might better serve Christ by training their children in a godly manner, and evangelizing the native tribes. We hear nothing of their losing their piety by coming from Europe to this land. On the contrary, their piety received a happy development by the work which they here performed. The foreign missionary goes to heathen lands that he may instruct the ignorant into the knowledge of divine things, and point the benighted to the Star of Bethlehem. There is no report of such missionaries losing their piety by going from home to heathen shores. When, therefore, the sad fact is reported that Christians in going from the east to the west, or from one place to another, lose their piety, we must consider that they do not go for the purpose of serving God. That object has not the first place, has no place in their plans.

Christians are sometimes visiting their friends when a meeting for prayer or the services of the Sabbath are held. Actuated by the principles here advocated, instead of detaining their friends and thus discouraging



the Christians of the place, they would go forth to the prayer meeting and the house of God, and thus exert a positive influence for good.

If the principles here advocated were carried out, there would not be so many churches left feeble in city and country. Brethren and sisters would seek out feeble churches which they might help to become strong and efficient, rather than able and wealthy churches which need not their assistance. And Christians in the country, whose business could be prosecuted as well, would locate where they could unite with feeble churches, to encourage them and build them up. And Christians located where they have all they can do to sustain the institutions of religion, where they have sacrifices to make in doing so, would not envy the condition of those who have but little to do for the promotion of such objects. They would rather rejoice that their lot had fallen to them where their labors and contributions were needed, rather than where labors and contributions would exist in abundance without them.

By adopting what is here advocated, a great work would be done by the mission churches at home and abroad, by the settlement of Christian laymen among them. By such a movement many churches might be made strong, and able to send the gospel to regions beyond them, while now they are struggling for existence; and many brethren might be highly useful, who are now doing comparatively nothing in the vineyard of the Lord. They belong to churches so numerous that they are not needed, and find no scope for the improvement

of their talents. By uniting with mission churches they would greatly increase their piety and usefulness.

Governed by such principles, many would be constrained to leave the churches at home and go to heathen shores. And foreign missionaries, accompanied by laymen as teachers, mechanics and farmers, would more rapidly evangelize and civilize the heathen. They would not only exert a more powerful social influence, but establish churches which would become speedily self-supporting. When such churches shall be established among the heathen, and not till then, will the work of their salvation steadily and rapidly progress.

Remember the field is the world. You are called into the vineyard to labor. If you are faithful you will receive a glorious reward. The presence of God and the manifestations of his love will attend you here, and in eternity you will rejoice. For the "wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever."

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#### HOME EVANGELIZATION.

"Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in."

It is a fact greatly to be deplored, that in communities where the institutions of religion are established, there exists a vast amount of heathenism. Multitudes habitually neglect the house of God. One quarter of the population in the states where the worship of God is best observed, wholly neglect the sanctuary, and

another quarter only occasionally find their way there. One half of the children are growing up without Sabbath school or any other religious instruction. From time to time, investigations have been made in different places, all of which have brought to light a lamentable neglect of public worship. Efforts have been made by individuals and churches to remedy the evil. But still, little has been done to bring this vast multitude to attend upon the means of grace, compared with what might have been done and ought to be done.

I propose to call attention to some reasons why this work has not been more effectually done, and to some suggestions as to how it may be carried forward.

One reason why more has not been done to evangelize the communities round about the churches, is that the attention of Christians has not been called to the subject as it should have been. The sight of our eyes affects our hearts. It is to be taken for granted that all real believers have something of love to souls, which would lead them to labor and pray for their salvation. But as Timothy needed that the gift that was within him should be stirred up, so do Christians need that this missionary spirit which is within them be stirred up. A view of the condition of things around them, the facts in relation to the neglect of the means of grace investigated, so as to present the whole group of home heathen around them to their view, would stir them up to effort for their evangelization. Statistics should be gathered, and the exact state of things as regards attendance upon the means of grace should be known by

the whole church. Let each church attend to this matter, and know the condition of things in the field allotted them.

Another reason why more has not been done to evangelize home heathen, is, that the church has not been sufficiently impressed with her responsibility in the matter. The church will do nothing effectually in the accomplishment of any work until she feels that it belongs to her to do. God has called the church to work. Not only has he called the church to work, but he has given them a work to do.

The work of the church is two-fold. It is, first of all, to promote her own growth in grace. Each member is called to promote holiness in his own heart and in the hearts of his fellow members. This work is essential to the prosperity of religion any where. It is preparatory to all successful effort to reach the unconverted. If the church is not making progress in holiness, she is doing nothing to purpose. All the means of grace look to the end of the Christian's advancement in holiness. The sanctification of the church should interest all her members. Paul taught Christians to pray for all that are called to be saints, and to exhort one another daily. A Christian and a church in a state of declension are like the salt which has lost its savor.

But a special work of the church is to bring to the knowledge of the truth such as are within their bounds, to gather to the house of God those around them in a state of heathenism. This is a work especially committed to them. Not that they are to have no care for

others. Parents are to care for others, but they are especially to care for their own children: if they do not, their children will have no special care. But if all parents care especially for their own children, then will all children be especially cared for. So if each church cares especially for those within their bounds, then will those within the bounds of the churches be cared for, but otherwise they will not. Oh, that the churches were sufficiently impressed with the fact, that to bring those who neglect the public worship of God and the Sabbath school to attend upon these means of grace, is their peculiar work. Until the church believe and feel that this is their work assigned to them by Heaven, in which they are to engage, and for which a special responsibility rests upon them, it will never be done. They must meet this class of their fellow men at the judgment, and, if unfaithful, be responsible for their destruction.

To gather this class of their fellow men to the house of God, is the peculiar work of the church, not only as specially committed to her, but because it will not be done unless the church engage in it. Ministers can not do it wholly. Their efforts to accomplish it will avail but little without the co-operation of the church in the work.

Another reason why the church has effected no more in bringing about a reformation among those neglecting the means of grace, is found in the want of faith that the work can and must be done. Almost every thing gives way before adequate exertion. But that exertion

will not be put forth by those who have not faith that the desired end may be accomplished by it. The Jews who came out of Egypt with Moses might have taken possession of the promised land as easily as they passed through the Red Sea, if they had possessed the faith to go forward. But they could not enter in because of unbelief. It is true, that where efforts are made to save men, God often goes before the faith of his people. But where there is no faith that leads to hopeful effort, there will be no result witnessed. As has been shown, all through this land of Sabbaths and sanctuaries, there is a large number of people living wholly in the neglect of public worship. Why are they not reached by the gospel, by the church, which is the light of the world and the salt of the earth? Why are not efforts put forth on a large scale and untiringly for their instruction and salvation? There is one obvious answer. There is not faith in the churches, that this class of persons can be benefited, enlightened, saved by Christian effort and prayer. Now Abraham believed that God was able to raise the dead; and so must the church believe, if she would accomplish the work which God has given her to do. Oh, for a simple faith among Christians to go forth in efforts to save those around them, relying upon the promise of Christ, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." None of those denominated home heathen are beyond the power of God to save. His truth, accompanied by the Holy Spirit, is adequate to their conversion. Said a missionary from a foreign station, "if you put the lowest deg-

radation of those around you in Christian lands at one, that of the heathen among whom I dwell will be one hundred. Yet the foreign missionary is to go forth believing that the gospel is sufficient to grapple with the mighty mass of heathenism, and to bring those sunk in its pollutions and errors to the purity and bliss of the sons of God. During Dr. Judson's visit to Boston, some one asked him "Do you think the prospect bright for the speedy conversion of the heathen?" "As bright," was his prompt reply, "as the promises of God." There is no good reason for the unbelief which exists respecting the efficacy of labors for benefiting this class of our fellow men. They should be looked upon as hopeful, because Christ is mighty to save, and because, where efforts for their good have been prayerfully, faithfully and systematically made, they have been successful. In respect to this kind of effort, it may be said generally, "they that have sown bountifully have reaped bountifully." We can not, therefore, but cherish the idea that the unbelief of which we have spoken is the result of inadequate views of the gospel, and of a low state of piety in the church.

Another reason why no more has been done by the church in reforming those who neglect the means of grace, is of a social nature. There are social attractions and repellencies, which must be regarded by those who would do good. To a greater or less extent this property of repellency exists among those who worship God toward those who do not. This existed in the days of Christ, but his whole ministry went to do it

away. If his example in the treatment of men were followed, the whole difficulty of which I speak would disappear. He received sinners, and ate with them. He regarded no social distinction, but associated with any, and all, for the sake of doing them good. An ordinary Jewish religionist would have said nothing to the woman of Samaria, but Jesus entered into conversation with her, which resulted in her salvation. The church has yet to learn the power of social attraction as a means of winning men to Christ.

There must be some sympathies among men, in order to mutual influence. The social chasm which exists between those who attend upon the means of grace and those who do not, must be passed by the church and those interested in religion, for the sake of Christ and his cause. They must by social influences attract and assimilate to themselves those who are without. This may be done by following the apostle's teachings: "Honor all men. Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification. Love as brethren; be courteous." When the neglecters of public worship come within the walls of the sanctuary, they should be made to feel that they are welcome, and that there are those who are glad to have them among them and of them. The design of Christianity is to elevate and also to bring down. "Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted; but the rich, in that he is made low; because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away." There have been many gathered from families neglecting public worship, who have been the most intelligent and



pious of all. Morrison, the distinguished missionary, was picked up in the streets of London, where he had been a poor, neglected boy. He that winneth souls is wise. So far as could be done without sacrificing principle, Paul identified himself with all sorts of people, that he might gain them to Christ. He declared, "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." For the gospel's sake let others follow his example. One thing which tends to increase the evil of the neglect of public worship, and to hinder the success of those who would labor to remove that neglect, is, such arrangements for the performance of divine worship as render it too expensive for many to attend upon it. Many houses of worship are built in a style so expensive as to exclude the common class of people, those dependent upon their labor, from seats in them. This is the very class of people with whom the Saviour chose to take rank. One of the evidences that he was the Messiah, was that unto the poor the gospel was preached. And for the great work of promulgating his gospel, he called chiefly those in the humble ranks of life.

And as the London Quarterly expresses it, "Apart from considerations of expense, there is something in the aspect of handsome churches which seems to repel the poor. They rarely enter such places, whether free seats be offered or not, except in very small numbers, and after a good deal of previous training in rooms of far more humble appearance. Stately spires and pointed window-frames without, elegant shafts with

arches and corbels within, frighten away the class whom we are desirous of bringing under the influences of religious training."

In addition to this, the expensive style of church edifices leaves a large portion of the people unsupplied with church accommodations. "In New York, in 1840, there was one church to every one thousand eight hundred persons. In 1850, one to every two thousand. In 1860, one to every three thousand. Ten years ago one-half the people could be seated in church on Sunday; at present but one-third. Large districts in all great cities are unblest with the courts of the Lord's house because the people can not build fine enough." Another way in which such costly edifices operate against the work of evangelization, is that they tend to corrupt Christianity, and a corrupt Christianity will not reach the masses in community to reform them. The true spirit of Christ is a leavening spirit. "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." It is a gathering spirit. The common people flocked to Christ and heard him gladly. Where the church is possessed of his spirit, people will flock to them and feel it a privilege to join them in the worship of God.

Let there be no lack of edifices for the accommodation of all who would worship God. Let there be places where the rich and the poor may meet together, and the poor rejoice in that he is exalted, and the rich in that he is made low.

In a certain town of my acquaintance the church was numerous, and the population sufficient to warrant colonization. Another church organization and edifice were needed to meet the wants of community. Instead of this there was enough spent in remodeling the house of worship and rendering it elegant, to have done all that was essential in its repair and to have built another house of worship. By this operation colonization was rendered impracticable, and the church edifice, though rendered ornate, was not capable of accommodating as many as it did before this vast outlay of expense upon it. Had it not been for a few scattered Christians of another denomination, who organized a church and sustained public worship in a hall, a large number of the people in that town would have been without any accommodations for the public worship of God. There are hundreds of instances in which colonization is needed, where it is prevented in this way. This difficulty of effecting colonization where it is needed, greatly retards the work of evangelization. Multiplication of churches where there are already sufficient to meet the wants of the population, is an evil. Multiplication of churches to a degree sufficient to meet the wants of the population, is a necessity. The instances are not rare in which the amount expended on one church edifice might have sufficed to erect three or four, each of which would much better subserve the interests of vital religion.

In order to secure the best attendance upon public worship, the distinction of honorable and dishonorable seats must be done away. Judgment must begin at the

house of God. "Let there be at least one place this side the grave where the rich and the poor may meet together on terms of equality, as the children of one Father in heaven; where the one party may learn a lesson of thankfulness and humility, and the other may feel that they are recognized as heirs together of the same inheritance; and where the hearts of all are bound together in one common sentiment of Christian sympathy, and then every worshiping assembly would testify that the children of God are one, and the world would believe that Christ was sent of the Father."

Wherever attendance upon the public worship of God can be promoted by it, distinctions in seats should be done away; so far, at least, that no seat should be considered degrading. Such a distinction as that of honorable and dishonorable seats exists. Let some of the more wealthy and influential members of the church sit in the least eligible seats, and they would find, by the feelings which would at once come over them, how considerable is that distinction. Now if by so doing, the attendance of a family upon the means of grace could be secured, a member of a church ought to be ready to give up a more for a less eligible seat.

The whole thing of abolishing distinctions of seats in the house of God, so far as to do away with the idea that any seat is degrading, is easily accomplished. Let a few well-to-do members of the church scatter themselves with their families among the less eligible seats in the meeting-house, and the work will be done. The idea that one seat is more eligible than another can not

be done away. The idea that any seat is degrading, that there is any distinction of honorable and dishonorable seats, can be done away. This distinction is that against which James speaks, and is wholly worldly.

One objection to this plan is, that if it were adopted, men would not pay according to their ability. The answer to this is, that what a Christian gives for a slip, he should give not merely for his own accommodation, but for the benefit of the cause of Christ. Let him pay for one of the seats that would not by the world be called eligible, what he would for the choicest seat, that is, what he is able to pay, and Providence calls upon him to pay. There is no regard for Christ in giving so much because I can have so good a seat. If by taking a less eligible slip I can do more for the cause of Christ, I ought most cheerfully to pay the same I would for a better.

There are those who would be willing to pay for a slip, and then go and sit on the pulpit stairs, if need be, if thereby they could induce a family living in the neglect of it to attend the public worship of God. In some cases there are prosperous families caring little for religion, but who would attend the public worship of God if they could have an eligible seat. In such cases those church members who covet not worldly distinction may serve the cause of Christ if they accommodate them, and take some less eligible seat themselves. There may be circumstances in which what is here advanced would have no application. But where the cause of religion can be promoted by adopting these suggestions, they should be carried out.

Regularity of attendance on the part of church members would do much for the cause of public worship. Hence a great responsibility rests upon them to be constant visitors at the house of God. When *they* become half-day worshipers, and every other Sabbath worshipers; when for any trivial cause *they* stay away from the house of God, how can it be expected that *others* should be regular in attendance? The effect of a thin house is to diminish the interest in the exercises of the Sabbath. It is too often the case that the absence of the members of the church from their places is the occasion of there being a thin house. It can not be expected that a spirit of church-going will pervade a community if it is lacking in the members of the church. It is often the case that the most serious obstacle in the way of home evangelization is encountered in the habits of church members in reference to going to the sanctuary.

Every church ought to adopt some system to secure the attendance upon the sanctuary of all within their bounds. Let them district out all their territory. Then let brethren and sisters be appointed who shall labor faithfully and continuously in every district. Without some such arrangement, proper effort will not be made with all to induce them to go to the sanctuary, and thus the church will come short of their duty.

This plan need not interfere with the individual effort of the members of the church. This should be constant. Each member may have peculiar influence over some one. Let that influence be exerted with all fidelity. There are some whose attainments or character or cir-

cumstances give them peculiar influence. Let them go forth and exert that influence to induce people to keep the Sabbath and reverence the sanctuary.

Children connected with the Sabbath school are often more successful in securing the attendance of children than any other laborers. They should be employed in this work for this reason, and because it is training them to habits which will be of great importance to them if they become Christians. Some make offers of presents to such children as will bring the greatest number of scholars to the Sabbath school. It operates better to give a reward for every new scholar brought from among those neglecting the Sabbath school.

In this work there must be perseverance in order to success. Its importance demands perseverance. This work should never cease, any more than that of the missionary on heathen shores. No spasmodic effort will accomplish it. Let it be undertaken with the purpose to continue in it so long as there remains one within the bounds of the church who neglects the sanctuary. It is perseverance that wins the day. Multitudes, after refusing invitations to attend the public worship of God, have finally complied. Though all may not be reached by this kind of effort, some will be, and the work will constantly progress where it is put forth. Some would like to attend upon the public worship of God, but they are not able to provide for themselves suitable clothing. Many children are detained from the Sabbath school who would attend if they were properly clothed. Where this difficulty exists it should be removed by the

charity of those interested in religious things. Though there are discouragements connected with this kind of labor, let it not be neglected. While some pervert it, for want of it many who would esteem it a privilege to attend upon the means of grace are kept at home, and many who would be morally and savingly benefited by the Sabbath school, grow up in habits of vice and impiety.

Another class neglecting the public worship of God is composed of those who would prize it as a privilege, but stay away for want of conveyance. They live at a distance from the place of public worship, are unable to own or hire a horse, and can not walk such a distance. Those wishing to promote public worship should interest themselves in furnishing conveyance for such persons. It would not only add them to the members of the congregation, but it would be a public testimony to the importance of public worship if they would do so.

Another class consists of such as are either indifferent about the sanctuary, or are among strangers, and need nothing to induce them to go up to the house of God but a kind or at most an earnest invitation.

Another class is made up of those who have prejudices against the church or congregation. In some cases these prejudices grow out of difficulties which can not be easily removed. They are also increased by interested persons. But much may be done socially to reach this class of persons. The apostle says, "Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification." Let there be condescension, kindness, courtesy, towards



all such. Let them be induced as much as possible to mingle in all the social gatherings of the congregation, as if they belonged to it really as they do geographically. More than all, let Christians cherish a deep interest in their welfare. Convince them that you are their friends, that you really desire to do them good, and much would be accomplished toward prevailing upon them to go with you to the house of God.

I have elsewhere treated of revivals. I now speak of them as a means of promoting attendance upon public worship. It is a common thing for pastors, as they look over their congregations after revivals of religion, to see among their hearers individuals and families who had been long living in the neglect of the sanctuary. This is a common feature of revivals. It always will be a feature of revivals until "the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it."

In reference to the effect of the revival in Ireland, in promoting attendance upon public worship, the following facts are adduced:

The Presbytery of Ahoghil reports that several that were lying out, from various excuses, from the ordinances of the preached gospel, have been moved to the house of God, in whatever attire they could command, though it were poor, while others have been stirred to obtain decent clothes, who are now to be seen regularly worshipping in the house of God, where they had not been seen for years before.

Among the reports from Belfast are many cheering facts. In Linenhall street about one hundred families have joined the congregation. In Rafferey seventy families are added. In Lecumpher the congregation is so much increased that the church requires to be enlarged. District prayer meetings, embracing the whole extent of the congregation, are held in the houses of the rich and the cottages of the poor.

Christians who are laboring and praying for a revival of God's work are doing something to promote attendance upon the public worship of God. Other things being equal, there will be the most general attendance upon the services of the sanctuary where Christians have most of the spirit of their Master, and labor and pray most earnestly for the salvation of souls.

The progress and completion of this work of home evangelization will be of great importance. What a happy change, when the people generally shall attend upon the means of grace! Then would religious ordinances be established where they are not, and churches already in existence would be increased and strengthened. Many churches have become waste places which would have been as the garden of the Lord if they had engaged as they should have done in this work.

There is no hope that this vast multitude who are living in a state of heathenism about the churches will be saved unless they can be induced to attend upon the sanctuary. Should not the view of this vast multitude going down to the chambers of death, move the hearts of Christians to exert themselves for their salvation?

But the public worship of God is the divinely appointed means of saving lost men.

“God in his earthly temple lays  
Foundations for his heavenly praise;  
He loves the tents of Jacob well,  
But still in Zion loves to dwell.”

In the old dispensation, His holy presence, his mercy seat, was in the sanctuary. In the present dispensation the preaching of the gospel is a part of the public worship of God, and through the foolishness of preaching it has pleased God to save them that believe. From the method of God's dealings there is very little hope that those who neglect the public worship of God will ever be saved. It is not his way to go out of his established course to bless and save men. God's way is in the sanctuary. There he has recorded his holy name. There he sends out the invitations of his love and mercy. There he melts the heart to penitence, and speaks the all-creating word that brings the dead to life. There he guides the inquiring. There he nourishes his children; leads them on from light to light and from strength to strength, till they are prepared for his nobler worship above.

## PART V.

### LIBERALITY.

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#### CAUSES OF THE DEFICIENCY OF LIBERALITY AMONG PROFESSED CHRISTIANS.

“IN no point, perhaps, do professing Christians come short so much as in the matter of giving money to God’s cause. Thousands, it may be feared, know nothing whatever of giving as a Christian duty. The little giving there is, is confined to a select few in the churches. Even among those who give, it may be boldly asserted that the poor give far more in proportion to their means than the rich.” Often on a subscription for home or foreign missions, do you find against the name of the mechanic, who depends upon his daily earnings, and against the name of the man worth his thousands, the same sum. It is sad that those engaged in a cause so important should be so negligent in giving their money to its promotion. Why is it so?

There is a want of the cheerful recognition of stewardship among Christians. They do not look upon their property as consecrated to God, to be used simply and only as a means of promoting to the utmost his glory. In accumulating and spending money, they do not habitually feel that they are acting for God, and not for themselves. This is undoubtedly one cause of the sad deficiency of Christians in giving. When Christians feel impelled to labor that they may have to give, and use what they acquire with an abiding sense that they

are but stewards, accountable to God for their fidelity, they undoubtedly will give more freely of their substance to his cause. Professed Christians do not realize that liberality, giving their money to the cause of God, is as essential to piety as a life of prayer, the observance of the Sabbath, and attendance upon the public worship of God. But it is as essential to Christian character, and may be far better evidence of piety. 2 Cor. 8 : 7. "Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, see that ye abound in this grace also." Acts 20 : 35. "I have showed you all things, how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." 1 Tim. 6 : 17. "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy ; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate ; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life." When the cause of God and the salvation of souls may be promoted by it, what benevolence can there be in the hearts of those who refuse to contribute liberally of their substance ?

Another reason of the deficiency of Christians in giving money to the cause of God, is a disposition to delay till they become independent, or accomplish certain worldly schemes. Many have in their hands the means of giving largely, but through the vicissitudes of trade,

and perhaps as a judgment for unfaithful use of "the unrighteous mammon," their property passes out of their hands before they get ready to give freely to the cause of God. And when this is not the case, withholding from giving fosters covetousness, so that with more abundant means they have no disposition to give liberally to the cause of God.

Another reason of this deficiency is, that professed Christians often adopt too expensive a style of living. They expend so much in maintaining this style of living as to blight their piety, and destroy their ability to give any considerable amount to the cause of God. They must have high style even in their arrangements for the public worship of God, though they give nothing for evangelizing the world.

Another cause of the deficiency we are considering is found in the limited extent to which Christians inform themselves in respect to the condition of the various fields of benevolent enterprise, and the blessed results accomplished by benevolent contributions. A knowledge of these things would stir their hearts within them, as Paul's heart was stirred when he beheld the heathen city wholly given to idolatry. It is often felt by those who stand on fields white for the harvest, that if their brethren could but see what they see, they would pour out their money into the treasury of the Lord. They would esteem it a privilege to labor and deny themselves, to have the ability to give.

Another reason why professed Christians give so little is found in the want of plan in giving. Nothing great

or good is accomplished without plan. Men of business have plans by which to make investments and meet obligations. But multitudes of Christians have no plan by which to bring liberally their substance into the treasury of the Lord. Hence they give stintedly for his cause. If Christians would stately lay by for the cause of God according as the Lord has prospered them, much larger sums would be contributed.

The results of this deficiency on the part of Christians, in giving their money to the cause of God, are lamentable.

It causes a failure in the exhibition of the excellency of religion. The true beauty of the religion of the cross shines forth in trust in God and beneficence towards men. When Christians trust in the Lord and do good, when they contribute liberally of their substance to benevolent objects, they let their light shine before others, and they, seeing of their good works, glorify their Father who is in heaven. But when they are covetous, the world fail to see any thing in them commending their profession.

Another evil occasioned by this deficiency is, that Christians fail of their own highest temporal and spiritual prosperity. "He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly." Should there be found, therefore, in a brother, the want of entering into his position as being merely a steward for the Lord in his calling, and should he give no heed to the admonitions of the Holy Ghost to communicate to those who are in need, or to help the work of God, then can such a brother be surprised that he meets with great difficulties in his calling, and that

he can not get on? This is according to the Lord's word. He is sowing sparingly, and he therefore reaps sparingly. But should the love of Christ constrain a brother, out of the earnings of his calling, to sow bountifully, he will, even in this life, reap bountifully, both with regard to blessings in his soul, and with regard to temporal things. "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth, and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty."

Another evil resulting from this deficiency is, that many fields opened by the providence of God for Christian labors are unoccupied, and in fields already occupied the work of evangelization is feebly prosecuted for want of more abundant means. Hundreds of laborers ready to go can not be sent, and those already sent suffer in all departments of labor for want of more funds. Thus the work of evangelizing the world makes tardy progress, and thus millions of souls perish in darkness, who might have the light of the gospel if Christians came up to their duty in devoting their money to the Lord.

Another and perhaps the most deplorable result is, that the piety of the church languishes, and the spirit of grace is withheld. In order to grow in piety, Christians must embrace the whole world in their affections. They must live to do good. In order to receive showers of grace they must bring all the tithes into the storehouse. Says one who has labored for years in promoting revivals of religion, "As I have gone from place to place laboring in revivals, I have always found that



churches were blessed in proportion to their liberality. Where they have manifested a disposition to support the gospel, and to pour their substance liberally into the treasury of the Lord, they have been blessed both in temporal and spiritual things. But where they have been parsimonious, and let their minister preach for little or nothing, these churches have been cursed rather than blessed." Says President Edwards: "I do not remember ever to have read of any remarkable outpouring of the Spirit, that continued any long time, but what was attended with an abounding in this duty. So we know it was with that great effusion of the Spirit that began at Jerusalem in the apostles' days. And it is foretold that God's people shall abound in this duty in the time of the great outpouring of the Spirit that shall be in the latter days." Isa. 32: 5 and 8. "The vile person shall no more be called liberal, nor the churl said to be bountiful. But the liberal deviseth liberal things and by liberal things shall he stand."

Such an increase of liberality in the church as the promotion of piety among Christians and the enterprises for the conversion of the world require, would be a great blessing. It is in the power of a few men in every church to elevate the standard of liberality in their body. Their example, their influence, and their exhortations, would accomplish the work. Blessed are they who shall share in doing it.

## LIBERALITY THE SOURCE OF PROSPERITY.

“Give and it shall be given unto you.”

LIBERALITY tends to the increase of temporal goods. The true value of wealth consists in its power to do good. The liberal understand this value of wealth. Hence, while they are honest they will be fortified against foolish expenditures, and diligently husband all their resources.

“Two persons who were employed in collecting money for some public charity knocked, at the door of a certain gentleman, intending to solicit his donation. While waiting there they overheard the master of the house severely reproofing his servant for the waste of a small piece of candle. Judging from this appearance of extreme parsimony that he was a covetous man, one of them proposed that they should lose no more time in waiting there, but go to the next house; the other person, however, thought it best to stay. At length they were introduced, when the gentleman, having read their case, immediately presented them with five guineas. The collectors, so agreeably disappointed, could not conceal their surprise; which being observed by the donor, he desired to know why they expressed so much wonder at his gift. ‘The reason, sir,’ said one of them, ‘is this: we happened to hear you severely blaming your servant for losing an inch of candle, and expected nothing from a person who we feared was so parsimonious.’ ‘Gentlemen,’ replied he, ‘it is true I am very exact in the economy of my affairs. I can not endure

the waste of any thing, however small its value ; and I do this that I may save out of a moderate income something to give to God and religion.’ ”

Besides, the liberal understand the value of time. They will be diligent in business, and “the hand of the diligent maketh rich.” Industry is the source of thrift.

Besides, God has promised that liberality shall result in the increase rather than the diminution of worldly substance. “The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered also himself. Honor the Lord with thy substance and with the first fruits of all thine increase ; so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine. Give and it shall be given unto you ; good measure, pressed down and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom.” The Author of these promises is infinitely able to fulfill them. “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein.” “He holds the lives and healths, the powers, faculties and various circumstances of his creatures ; holds the winds and waves and seasons, and all the sources of temporal as well as spiritual good, most completely in his hands and at his control. He has innumerable ways to bless those whom he is pleased to bless, and to curse those whom he is pleased to curse. Is not his promise, then, of all securities, the greatest, that ‘the liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered also himself?’ ”

Those in different ages of the world, who have made

widely extended observation, have asserted this doctrine. Basil, one of the primitive fathers, says the best way of thriving is to give to them that are in want. "The field of the poor is very fruitful, and quickly yieldeth an increase to the charitable. God twice pays what is lent to him; once in this world by multiplying the wealth of alms-givers, then in heaven he pays it over and over."

Dr. Scott says, "Liberality, exercised from right motives, is sowing the seed, and God gives the increase, generally, even, in temporal things. If he sees it best, large increase, flourishing trade, kind friends, and various other supplies and savings will soon reimburse the expenses of genuine charity."

"As the charitable bishop of Milan was one day traveling with his servant, they were overtaken by some poor people who asked alms. The bishop directed to give them what money he had, which, as it happened, was no more than three crowns. The servant, however, thought it was not prudent to part with all, and gave them but two. Directly afterwards the bishop received a present of two hundred crowns, upon which he is reported to have said to his disobedient servant, 'See how in wronging the poor of their due, thou hast likewise wronged me. If thou hadst given them those three crowns which I commanded thee, I should have received three hundred crowns, whereas now I have but two.'"

\* In the time of the war of 1812, Thomas Andros, minister of Berkeley, Massachusetts, in making his parish

visits, called upon a widow who was quite ill, and almost entirely destitute of food for herself and child. He hastened home, took the last half bushel of corn, got it ground, and carried it to the widow. As he was returning he, overtook a team loaded with provisions which one of his parishioners was carrying to him. The blockade had been removed from Newport, a cargo of provisions had arrived at Berkeley wharf, and the people flocked to it for supplies. When they had obtained them, one said to another, "We must remember our minister." By subscription a load was soon purchased and sent to him. While he was giving away the last he had, as the poor widow cast in her two mites into the treasury, the Lord was moving upon the hearts of others to give to him many fold more than he had given to the suffering.

They badly calculate who do not give liberally as God hath prospered them. They gain nothing by way of increasing their earthly treasures. They often lose, for God sends adversity upon them for their covetousness. They fail of that good which the exercise of their benevolent feelings would bring, of that approbation of God and that reward in heaven which the exercise of liberality would secure.

Comparative poverty, and even dependence upon friends, need not prevent people from giving to do good to others. Those who have but little, will be no more likely to suffer from want by giving a portion of that little for benevolent purposes; and certainly they will have a blessing in their souls by doing so. But let them

give with a heart fully trusting in the Lord, and fully believing that he will bless them in the ways of well-doing.

The people of God need not fear that they shall be impoverished by many and frequent calls upon their charity. God makes no calls upon his people which he does not provide means for them to meet. Let them, then, hail with joy every object of benevolence, and never tire in giving, as in his providence God calls upon them to do.

It is obvious that when God's people have faith to give as the interests of Christ's kingdom require, there will be no lack of ability to give all that is needed. For as they give, God will give unto them, and thus the streams will be constantly flowing forth to sustain the instrumentalities for carrying light and salvation through the earth.

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#### GREAT GOOD ACCOMPLISHED BY LIBERALITY.

“THERE was once a three-penny piece given to a little boy. He resolved to use it in the work of the Lord. He bought some tracts with it, and had them put into a box of things that was to be sent to a missionary in India. The son of a great chief in the interior of India was stopping at the house of the missionary. The wife of the missionary taught the youth to read, and gave him one of the little boy's tracts. The reading of that tract made the young chief a Christian. When he went back to his mountain home he took that

tract and many others with him. He scattered them among the people of his native place. They were read by multitudes, and in one year from that time fifteen hundred people in that neighborhood had given up the worship of idols, and were inquiring about the religion of Jesus."

## PART VI.

### THE GOSPEL MINISTRY.

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#### REASONS FOR THE LIBERAL SUPPORT OF THE GOSPEL.

EVERY community should be liberal in supporting the gospel, because they can not afford to do without the gospel. The preaching of the gospel is actually the means of saving to them more than its liberal support costs. Facts abundantly sustain this position. A certain parish thought they were too poor to support the public worship of God. They accordingly closed up their house of worship, and for five years lived without the preached word. Then some began to reflect and to estimate the consequences. They found that during that period their real estate had diminished fifty per cent., their social condition had degenerated, and their vicious expenditures upon the Sabbath alone had been more than equal to the support of a minister. These facts were laid before the people, and they came to the conclusion that they could not afford to do without the gospel. No community can afford to do without the preaching of the word. Therefore, every member of a community can afford to be liberal in its support.

The gospel should be liberally supported, because God has connected temporal prosperity with its liberal support. A writer in the "Southern Presbyterian" says: "I never knew a prosperous church that did not give a minister a salary that was liberal compared with the means of the people. I never knew a church that gave



a minister a liberal support, that was not prosperous. I never knew a man who paid a liberal subscription to his pastor, who was not paid back by Providence more than double the sum. I never knew a church member who was stingy to his minister, who in the long run was prospered in his worldly affairs." When God's ancient people brought all the tithes into the store-house, their barns burst out with plenty and their presses with new wine. But when the tithes were withheld, temporal blessings failed. It is still true, that they who withhold more than is meet will find that it tendeth to poverty.

To be liberal in the support of the gospel is productive of spiritual prosperity. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." This was spoken primarily in reference to the support of the gospel. They who are liberal in this thing, cultivate a liberal spirit. This spirit to live, not unto ourselves but unto Him that died for us, is the very essence of sanctification. When it reigns in the heart, sin is mortified, and the body becomes the temple of the Holy Ghost. If they would progress in holiness and receive the blessing of heaven, a church must be liberal in meeting the calls of God for the devotion of their substance to the interests of his kingdom, both at home and abroad.

Besides, if a minister of the gospel is employed at all, it is economy to support him well. He will thus be enabled to devote himself wholly to his work; to lay aside those secular cares which tend to distract the mind, and to escape those embarrassments which weaken its power. It has been stated in ministerial bodies

of high standing, that when a minister is in debt, or is crippled in his resources, he loses about one-half the working power of the brain. Besides, a minister well supported will be able to furnish himself with those means of self-culture needed in his calling. He will of course be more profitable to his people. A parish who give their minister only a partial support, and leave him to the necessity of devoting a portion of his time to secular pursuits, and of denying himself the means of personal improvement, will be themselves the losers. The cost of religious institutions, when they are well supported, is small in comparison with the cost of other things. If a whole family should pay for the support of the gospel, annually, what it would cost for the tuition of one of their children at a select school, it would be considered liberal. In most cases it would be all that would be required. And who can doubt that the labors of a minister in a community are of as much value to a whole family as the labors of a teacher in instructing one of its members? Many professed Christians expend far more for trifles, some even for tobacco, than they contribute to the support of the gospel.

Says Dr. Spring: "We are driven to the conclusion that the deficiency in the support of ministers is to be attributed to a defective estimate of the gospel. Men who are destitute of it are destitute of the appointed means of salvation, for there is salvation in no other. There are no other instruments of fitting men for heaven; no other instruments of turning them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto

God ; nor is it possible that it should have a saving effect upon those who do not enjoy it. A community without the preached gospel ! There is nothing worth living for in such a community. It may be rich in rivers, in ore, and in luxuriant soil. It may be well watered as the plains of Sodom, and as accursed as they. I would not educate a family in such a community for all the prairies between the Alleghany and Rocky mountains."

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A LETTER FROM A CLERGYMAN TO A CHRISTIAN  
LADY.

"HILL SIDE, May, 1862.

*My Dear Sister in Christ* :—I rejoice in the sympathy you express for the ministers of the gospel, and the interest you manifest for their welfare. I believe that they have ever found some of their most efficient helpers and steadfast friends among those of your sex.

It is said that woman was the last at the cross and the first at the sepulchre. Paul makes honorable mention of women who were his friends and helpers. In his Epistle to the Romans he says : "I commend unto you Phœbe, who is a servant of the church at Cenchrea, that ye receive her as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you ; for she hath been a succorer of many and of myself also. Greet Mary who bestowed much labor on us." To the Philippians he says : "Help those women who labored with me in the gospel."

There was a Deborah as well as a Joshua among the

deliverers of Israel. But I have sometimes thought that though there are so many illustrious examples of usefulness among women, it is not generally the fact that the sisters of the church appreciate their power to do good. By their social influence, by their prayers and personal efforts, they must take a prominent part in subjugating the world to Christ. It is to the mothers in Israel that we must look for that training of the young which will early bring them to Christ, and thus perpetuate and enlarge the church, and bring forward ministers and missionaries to labor for the defense and promulgation of the gospel. A mother's influence and prayers have been instrumental of the conversion of some of the most efficient laborers in the vineyard of the Lord. Could you know how often ministers hear those who relate their religious experience refer to a mother's instruction and prayers, it would inspire you with faith and zeal in training your children for God. Maternal associations, where mothers meet to consult and pray, to encourage and advise each other, how glorious! They can not but be fruitful of good, if mothers are consecrated to God, and realize their privileges, and desire to be faithful in their duties. If they did nothing more than to unite their prayers to the God of Abraham for their children, it would not be in vain. Let mothers form these associations, attend them, take their children with them at such times as arrangements are made for their presence, and be ready to do their part to give interest to them, and good will be accomplished. So long as mothers have a desire to train their children for God

and for usefulness, rather than for the world and pleasure, the church will live and extend.

You inquired in your last what are my views of the "Shady Side." I reply. I have but little sympathy with that kind of literature. Ministers are generally voluntary in their settlement over a people, and if they dwell among a stingy people, they must do the best they can to make them prize the gospel and become liberal. But complaints are out of place. They will not accomplish the object.

Still I believe it is wisdom in people to give their ministers a liberal support. If they give them only a sufficiency for a bare subsistence, and nothing as a means of improvement and recreation, I believe they are "penny wise and pound foolish." Nor do I doubt that in most instances, where ministers are struggling to live, their people might do much more for their comfort and usefulness than what they do.

You say that the church to which you belong have given their pastor leave of absence for six months, voted to supply the pulpit, and made him up a purse of two thousand dollars to defray his expenses on a visit to Europe. I do not repine at the privileges of city ministers. They are exposed to more constant excitement than we. They have not the refreshing breeze, the rural walks, and the quiet shades, which fall to the lot of country clergymen. Still I have thought that in respect to the matter of which you speak, there is more disparity between city and country ministers, or rather between the ministers of rich and poor parishes, than there need

to be, than there should be. I attended commencement at my Alma Mater ten years after I graduated. There I met a minister who graduated two years before I did. He told me he had not had the means to attend commencement before since he graduated. A large proportion of the ministers in the smaller parishes are not able to attend a college commencement, the anniversaries of the benevolent societies, or the meetings of the boards of missions. It seems to me that it would be no more for the poorer parishes to make up a sum sufficient to send their pastor to a college commencement, and to the anniversaries of the benevolent societies, than it is for wealthy parishes to send their ministers to Europe; and I am sure the favor would be as gratefully received, and as beneficial both to pastor and people. My dear friend, I received an impulse at a college commencement two years ago, which I feel now. I really feel that I have been a better minister, more profitable to my people ever since. It would be really one of the most economical outlays for themselves, for a people to defray the expenses of their minister to such anniversaries, because he would have more to communicate to them.

I exchanged last Sabbath with a brother who is settled over a feeble church. As I parted with him on his way to preach to my people, he said to me: "Give notice to my people that their pastor will be absent next Sabbath. The widow W—— told me if I wished to visit my sister at Saratoga she would furnish the means."

When I returned home, my daughter said, "Mr. C. dropped his pocket book in the parlor, and went out

of the room without noticing it. As I picked it up and carried it to him I perceived that it was well filled with bank notes.'

Now I believe that if it were suggested to all the weaker churches to do some such thing for their ministers, it would accomplish far more than all the 'Shady Side' literature. As you have correspondence in quite a number of these churches, please suggest to them to set the thing in motion.

Yours, very truly,

EVANGELICUS."

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#### HINTS TO THE PEOPLE ABOUT MINISTERS.

It not unfrequently happens that people have some misunderstanding with their neighbors who attend the same meeting with them, or are members of the same church. These difficulties often create jealousy and animosity. And some people attempt to induce others to adopt their personal quarrels. They want every body to manifest a dislike to those towards whom they feel inimical. At least, they would have all treat them with coldness. Not a few take special pains to influence their minister to such a course as this. They sometimes complain because he ignores their personal quarrels. They feel disturbed to see him courteous, cordial and social with those towards whom they feel such an antipathy. But this is unreasonable. A minister should know nothing of your personal variances. He must be the bond of union in the church and society. That he may enjoy the confidence and affection of all his people, let

him treat them all in a friendly manner. So far as performing his pastoral duties and extending proper attention to each one will do it, let him gain the friendship of all. Don't wish him to be at variance with any of his people because you are. If you do, you cherish a spirit inconsistent with his highest usefulness and with the prosperity of the congregation. Don't ask him to hear your complaints against your neighbors, nor to pronounce your quarrel just. If you want your minister to unite the people and build up the society, and at the same time demand such things of him, it is unreasonable. If you regard his happiness and usefulness, and the interests of religion, you will wish him to cultivate, and be glad to see him enjoy, the confidence and love of all. If possible, live peaceably with all men. If you must have contentions with any of your neighbors, be careful that you do not embroil others in them. By all means allow your minister to stand aloof from them.

Among the blessings which you derive from the ministry of reconciliation, is that of personal visitation by your pastor. But the good accomplished by this visitation will depend very much upon you. The following suggestions are offered to assist you in making it profitable :

Desist from any farther apologies about the appearance of your person or house than a mention of the business of the day. Receive your minister as a friend, not as a stranger. Feel that he has come to do you good, not to view your situation and make remarks



about you. Make the most of his visit for your spiritual improvement and the spiritual good of your family. Be careful to have the children called in. When I was a child the good parson called at my father's house and mentioned my name in prayer. The influence of that visit will never be lost upon me. Its results will reach onward through eternity. *Call in the children.* Furnish your minister with a Bible, and ask him to read and pray with you. The chief value of his call will depend upon this. If any members of your family are without hope, if any are thoughtful, give your pastor opportunity to converse with them alone. Do all in your power to render his visits profitable to your soul and to your family, and they will encourage him and bless you. Nothing can be more unwise in you, or discouraging to your minister, than for you to fail to appreciate his visitation as a means of religious benefit, or to neglect making those arrangements in your family which will render it useful.

"Is any among you sick? let him call for the elders of the church."

It is a plain duty of a gospel minister to visit the sick. This duty is not confined to ministers alone, however, but belongs to all Christians. It is a mark of a Christian to perform it. In his approval of his people at the final judgment, Christ says, "I was sick and ye visited me."

If the unconverted are sick, such Christians as know the fact should send information to the minister, that he may call and see them. Now is the time to show them attention, and manifest for them that sympathy which the world can not extend—the sympathy of Christian

hearts. Said a young man when relating his Christian experience, "I was convinced of the necessity and excellence of religion in a time of severe sickness. Then my worldly companions went forward in their amusements as they had been wont. None of them came to see me. The sick chamber was too gloomy for them. But Christians showed me constant attention and sympathy, and cheered my desponding heart. I then determined to renounce the world and seek religion." Let such facts be remembered by Christians and ministers.

But if Christians are sick, they must not expect, as a matter of course, that the minister will know it, and call and see them. Unless they have sent for him, they must not complain if they remain some time sick before he visits them.

When you are sick, send for your minister to come and see you. Your sending for him will make his visit more profitable to you. Your mind will be better prepared to receive his call. And he will be able better to sympathize with you, and speak to you words of instruction and consolation, when he knows you are desiring to see him.

Don't wait till you are very sick, and feel that your situation is critical, before you send for your minister. Then he can do you very little good, for you can only hear a few words of instruction and prayer. And when you are visited with sickness, you always should take it for granted that it may be fatal, and proceed accordingly.

Besides, for the following reasons you ought to send for your minister at the commencement of your sickness.

Whether you live or die, you ought to make the best improvement of your sickness for your spiritual good. That this may be the case, you should at the outset especially commit yourself to God and seek his grace. You should employ all the helps you can obtain to come into a state of nearness to God and of rejoicing in the hope of his glory. By such a course, whether your sickness be long or short, you will derive a blessing from it.

By this means you will secure that grace which will prepare you to bear your sickness with patience, although it may be severe and protracted. You will rise above all the troubles and pains which attend it. You will realize that as the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so is the Lord round about them that fear him. Your richer experience of the blessing of God's grace will make up for the loss of health.

By pursuing this course you will glorify God. You will be able to exhibit the excellency of religion in its power to sustain under trials, and to sanctify them to the soul. You will have strength to speak of Jesus and recommend him to others. The religion of Jesus Christ can do that for men, in enabling them to rejoice in tribulation and in giving them peace and triumph in death, which nothing else can do. I have stood by the bedside of those in pain and languishing, and in death, who have enjoyed such perfect peace, such complete support, and such bright anticipations, that I could not but lift up my hands and praise God for the unspeakable gift of Jesus Christ. Seek to be one to glorify God in the fires.

It is true that our daily life should be such as to pre-

pare us to rejoice in tribulation and to glorify God in death. We should so live in the enjoyment of Christ as to feel that it would be gain for us to depart and be with him. But however bright may be our hopes, and however complete may be our enjoyment of God's presence, it will comport with our weakness and dependence to examine ourselves and seek new supplies of grace when laid upon the sick bed.

If it must be that clouds hang over you in sickness and in death, let it not be because you have not employed all means to obtain grace to sustain you through such scenes.

Another reason why you should call for your minister in the first stages of your sickness, is, that he may have the benefit of interviews with you when you are able to converse with him. From interviews with the children of God in the time of their sickness, the minister receives much to comfort and animate him, and guide him in his instructions to others. He is made sad when he finds that one of the members of his church are near the gates of death before he has been informed of their sickness, and that he is deprived of that privilege of administering comfort, and of witnessing their experience, which an earlier knowledge of their condition would have enabled him to enjoy.

A constant and attentive hearing of the gospel is one of the plainest duties of those among whom it is preached. It is their duty to themselves, for such hearers are greatly profited by the gospel. It is their duty to the great Head of the Church who sends forth the heralds of

the cross. It is their duty to their minister. Without this they fail to manifest sympathy for him, or to appreciate his labors. They neither hold up his hands nor co-operate with him in his efforts to do good. The minister has studied and prayed to have something prepared to profit his people. In his preparation he has been cheered by the hope of imparting to them some spiritual benefit. How it must sadden his heart when he rises to deliver his message, to find many of his people absent from the house of God. If you would be one to encourage the heart and hold up the hands of your minister, be in your place in the sanctuary when he stands in the pulpit to preach the word.

When the gospel is preached, is it a matter to be regulated by convenience wholly, whether you listen to it or not? So far as moral obligation is concerned, is it left at your own option whether to hear or not? This your inconstant attendance at the house of God would imply. But would you wish to inculcate such a sentiment? If it should prevail, could you expect a spirit and habit of church-going to be general in community? Could you expect that congregations would be built up and established? The public worship of God is a duty. Let your example inculcate it. Let no slight excuse keep you from the sanctuary. Pursue such a course that if you are absent from the courts of the Lord it will be generally felt there is some good reason for it. If the day is unpleasant, you expect your minister to preach. Don't leave him to preach to empty pews.

Said one of the most distinguished and successful

ministers of the gospel: "If I have accomplished important results by preaching, it has not been by a mighty movement produced by a single discourse, but by following up an impression by one sermon after another, till it resulted in decision and action." But how can a minister succeed in this way with inconstant hearers? They would thwart the plans and diminish the usefulness of the best of ministers.

Another thing connected with the profitable hearing of the word is your arranging yourselves in the best manner in the house of God. It matters little what pew you occupy. It is more important that you enter it with a devout heart, and that you endeavor to cherish a sense of the presence of God in his earthly courts. Have your family seated with you in the sanctuary. This arrangement is agreeable to that affection which the members of a family should exercise toward each other, and essential to their exerting the best influence over each other. For want of this arrangement many young people spend profitless Sabbaths and contract evil habits, besides being a source of annoyance and sorrow to the minister.

Go to the house of God with a desire to be profited, and with earnest prayer for a blessing upon the word preached. Endeavor to join in the acts of prayer and praise. Make them your own. Listen to the sermon as a message from God. Be a doer of the word and not a hearer only, and you will find the tabernacles of the Lord amiable. A day in his courts will be better than a thousand.

We have a word to say to Mr. sleeper. It is somewhere reported that a minister once noticing several of his congregation asleep, stopped in the midst of his discourse and began to cry "Fire! fire! fire!" Some of the sleepers aroused and inquired "Where?" "In hell, for such sleepy sinners as you are," replied the preacher. We would not say that all who sometimes fall asleep in the house of God are wrong at heart. It may be that sometimes the spirit is willing while the flesh is weak. Still, to such the following thoughts may not be inappropriate:

Think of what the apostle says in reference to the perversion of the Lord's Supper. "What! have ye not houses to eat and drink in, or despise ye the church of God and shame them that have? Have ye not houses to sleep in, or despise ye the house of God and shame them that have?"

There is a remedy for this evil. Rise early upon the Sabbath morning, and give such attention to your temporal affairs as duty requires. Then sleep an hour before meeting in the morning. Do the same in the afternoon. Then if your sleeping has been while you would really desire to be awake and attentive to the services of the sanctuary, you will avoid the evil.

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#### PRAYER FOR MINISTERS.

"BRETHREN, pray for us," was the request of the great apostle of the gentiles. This was a request not

only for himself and his co-laborers, but also for the ministers of Christ in every age.

It is encouraging to the ministers of the cross to know that they are remembered in the prayers of God's people. Besides, it gives a people an interest in their minister to intercede for him at the mercy-seat. When the family go up to the house of God upon the Sabbath, they will hear their minister with much more attention and profit, when he has been remembered during the week at the family altar.

The gifts and qualifications of ministers are from God. Before they went forth to preach the Cross, the apostles were to wait for the baptism of the Holy Ghost. This divine preparation bestowed in answer to prayer, is what renders ministers a rich blessing to their people. "Let the thought sink deep into the heart of every church, that their minister will be very much such a minister as their prayers may make him. If nothing short of omnipotent grace can make a Christian, nothing less than this can make a faithful and successful minister of the gospel."

The success of ministers depends upon a divine blessing. They are but earthen vessels. If, then, they speak with tenderness and earnestness, if the gospel proclaimed by them comes with power to the hearts of men, and is instrumental of leading them to renounce the world, and turn to God, it is because Christ fulfills his promise, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." How important, then, that Christians pray for ministers, that they may be successful in winning souls!



“O, it is at a fearful expense that ministers are ever allowed to enter the pulpit without being preceded, accompanied, and followed by the earnest prayers of the churches. It is no marvel that the pulpit is so powerless, and ministers so often disheartened, when there are so few to hold up their hands. The consequence of neglecting this duty is seen and felt in the spiritual declension of the churches, and it will be seen and felt in the everlasting perdition of men, while the consequence of regarding it would be the ingathering of multitudes into the kingdom of God, and new glories to the Lamb that was slain.”

“The pastor of a congregation in America, after many years labor among his people, was supposed by some of them to have declined much in his vigor and usefulness; in consequence of which, two gentlemen of the congregation waited upon him and exhibited their complaints. The minister received them with much affection, and assured them that he was equally sensible of his languor and little success, and that the cause had given him great uneasiness. The gentlemen wished he would mention what he thought was the cause. Without hesitation the minister replied, ‘the loss of my prayer-book.’ ‘Your prayer-book,’ said one of the gentlemen, with surprise, ‘I never knew that you used one.’ ‘Yes,’ replied the minister, ‘I have enjoyed the benefit of one for many years, till lately, and I attribute my want of success to the want of it. The prayers of my people were my prayer-book, and it has occasioned great grief to me that they have laid it aside. Now if you

will return and procure me the use of my prayer-book again, I doubt not I shall preach much better, and you will hear more profitably.' The gentlemen, conscious of their neglect, thanked the minister for his reproof, and wished him a good morning."

## PART VII.

### CHILDREN AND THE SABBATH SCHOOL.

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#### THE EARLY CONVERSION OF CHILDREN.

It is a blessed peculiarity of the Bible that it is pervaded with a spirit of tender regard for little children. Jesus, in whom are concentrated all the truths of revelation, said, "Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." The Bible awakens in the heart of every one who imbibes its spirit, a deep interest in the education and salvation of the young. It teaches to expect, under faithful training, the early conversion of children. When children are capable of knowing, they are capable of loving God. A superintendent once put this question to a school: "How soon should children begin to love God?" A little girl replied, "As soon as they know who he is." When children are old enough to sin, they are old enough to repent. Soon as they need salvation they can understand enough of the gospel to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and be saved.

Parents and Sabbath school teachers should labor to secure the salvation of children as early as they need salvation. They should pray with and for them, and teach them, with the expectation of their conversion. Making proper allowance for the difference of time essential to develop youthful mind in different cases, there is still need of a great increase of faith in reference to

the early conversion of children. During the revival under President Edwards, a little girl of four years was convicted and converted. She gave in childhood good evidence of regeneration, and brought forth the fruits of piety through a long series of years, till God took her home to himself. Many little children have been made temples of the Holy Ghost. Why need years be spent in sin before the heart is given to Christ and the service of God chosen? The idea that little children can not have sound religious experience, is without foundation in either reason or Scripture, and needs to be done away. In consequence of this idea, children suffer the loss of much instruction and prayer which would otherwise be bestowed upon them. Says a distinguished clergyman, "Throughout the churches I have noticed a kind of abhorrence of any thing like early childlike piety. We are frightened at the idea of a little boy loving Christ, and if we hear of a little girl following the Saviour, we say it is a youthful fancy, an early impression, that will die away. My dear friends, I beseech you never treat infant piety with suspicion. It is a tender plant; dont brush it too hard.

"I heard a tale some time ago which I believe to be perfectly authentic. A dear little girl, some five or six years old, a true lover of Jesus, requested of her mother that she might join the church. The mother told her she was too young. The poor little thing was grieved exceedingly; and after a while, the mother, who saw that piety was in her heart, spoke to the minister on the subject. The minister talked to the child, and said to

the mother, 'I am thoroughly convinced of her piety, but I can not take her into the church ; she is too young.' When the child heard that, a strange gloom passed over her face ; and the next morning, when her mother went to her little bed, she lay with a pearly tear or two on each eye, dead for very grief ; her heart was broken because she could not follow her Saviour and do as he had bidden her. I would not have murdered that child for the world. Take care how you treat young piety. Be tender of it. Believe that children can be saved as much as yourselves. When you see the young heart brought to the Saviour, don't stand by and speak harshly, mistrusting every thing. It is better sometimes to be deceived than to be the means of ruining one. God send to his people a more firm belief that little buds of grace are worthy of all care."

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#### PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY.

"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." From this passage we infer that parents are responsible for the moral and religious character of their children. The Scriptures assume the ground that the means of forming the character of the child are so committed to the parent, that if he properly employs them, the character of the child will be correct. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." Facts show that the moral and religious character of children is the result of what the parent does or neglects to do.

Not long before his death, John Randolph wrote a letter to a friend, in which, among other things, he said, "At one period of my life I was upon the point of becoming a French atheist. I had let go my hold, in a great degree, of the doctrine of Christianity and of the truth of the Bible, and was about taking the plunge into the dreadful abyss of atheism. I was only held back from it by the recollection that when I was a child my mother, who is now a saint in heaven, used to make me kneel by her side, and then taking my little hands between hers, she taught me to say 'Our Father who art in heaven.'"

John Quincy Adams once said, "It is due to gratitude and nature, that I should acknowledge and own that such as I have been, whatever it is, and such as I hope to be in all futurity, must be ascribed, under Providence, to the example and precepts of my mother."

"Samuel Budgett," says his biographer, "was early taught to worship and obey and seek the God from whose hand his young being had come. What Lamar-tine so beautifully says of his own mother, might be said equally of Budgett's: 'We could not remember the day when she *first* spoke to us about God.' One of the friends of his after life thus states one of those events which pass silently within the bosom of Christian families, but which reappear in the life of their members, in blessed and memorable fruit: "He was about nine years of age, when one day, in passing his mother's door, he heard her engaged in earnest prayer for her family, and for himself by name. He thought, 'My mother is

more earnest that I should be saved than I am for my own salvation.' In that hour he became decided to serve God, and the impression then made was never effaced." In this manner began the Christian life of one of the most useful and honored of the sons of commerce, who, rising from poverty, acquired wealth and devoted it with a liberal hand to the service of religion and humanity."

When they are grown up, many feel that they are wretched and miserable in consequence of the neglect of their parents to train them in the way in which they should go.

"There is at this moment, in the place where I reside," writes a clergyman, "a young man under sentence of death for murder. He is but little over twenty years of age, and has thus early become a most hardened wretch; and the crime, for which in a few days he is to suffer the penalty, was committed under circumstances of so much coolness and forethought, as to render the murderer an object of peculiar abhorrence. Since his conviction, he has said if he had been religiously educated he should not now be in a dungeon. But his father and mother were both ungodly, and thus an only son was brought up with no fear of God before his eyes."

The parent is responsible. He is only resolving to perform his duty when he resolves, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." He is responsible to the child whose destiny depends upon his fidelity, whose happiness for time and eternity depends upon the character now formed. He is responsible to society. The

good or evil connected with the life of every human being is immense. Let the child be what he should be, and he will serve his country and his race. Let him grow up in vice, and he will be like the plague and pestilence, scattering death in his train. He is responsible to Christ. The fact whether his child is to be the means of extending the Redeemer's kingdom, or of opposing the reign of Christ, is to be decided in a great measure by the early training he receives. This responsibility grows out of the relation of parent and child, and is universal and immutable. O parent! when that immortal mind was intrusted to you, its instruction and training were committed to your charge. And should it be otherwise? Who should care for the child, who should watch over it and secure its welfare, if not the parent? If he is untrue to his trust, who can be expected to fulfill it for him?

Many parents do not feel this responsibility. They have an anxiety to provide food and raiment and shelter for the child, but do not seem to realize that for its principles, its habits, its conduct, in a word for its character, they have a responsibility. Their sons make themselves vile, and they restrain them not.

But how shall this responsibility be met? There must be a purpose, a resolution to meet it. You must resolve to be faithful to your children. You must have a purpose to train them up in the way they should go. You must study your duty to them, and often inquire how you are discharging it. Let your example be right before your children. Serve the Lord yourself. With-



out piety you can not fulfill your obligations to your children. Let proper care be exercised to know the habits and inclinations of the child, and adapt your instructions to them. Begin with the first dawnings of the intellect. Endeavor early to form a conscience, a habit of acting from principle. By your example and precept impress upon the mind of the child that the first thing is to be right. Let him not fail to receive your approbation when he does right. Be sparing in your commands. Give none which you do not think of sufficient importance to be enforced, and then see that they are obeyed. The habit of obedience to parental authority prepares the way for submission to civil authority and to the authority of God. Many a youth has resisted the Spirit, and perished in consequence of disobedience to parental authority. Beware of preparing your children for such things. Let your house be a Bethel, where the word of God is daily read, and petitions ascend to the mercy-seat. Bring your children under those influences and instructions in society which go to form right character. See that they observe the Sabbath. Bring them to the Sabbath school. Form in them habits of attendance upon the means of grace, the prayer meeting and the preaching of the word. Teach them daily to read the Holy Scriptures and call upon God in the closet. With unceasing earnest prayer, plead with God to bless your instructions, and to remember his promise to be a God to you and to your seed after you. And forget not that by every faithful parent a glorious reward will be obtained.

THE RELATION OF THE SABBATH SCHOOL TO THE PUBLIC WORSHIP OF GOD AND THE PROSPERITY OF THE CHURCH.

“God in his earthly temple lays  
Foundation for his heavenly praise.”

THERE is nothing more delightful, therefore, than to see generally prevailing in community the habit of attendance upon the public worship of God. “I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.” But in youth those habits are formed which determine the future course in life. Those who pass the season of youth in the neglect of the house of God, will generally continue in the neglect of it, and live and die in their sins. Concerning a large proportion of the young, there is no hope that they will form habits of attendance upon public worship unless they receive religious instruction and training beyond what is given them at home. And how shall they receive such instruction unless they are brought to the Sabbath school? Gather the neglected children into the Sabbath school, and you will increase the congregation in the house of God. Children and youth generally may be induced to attend the Sabbath school. Those who attend that will generally form habits of attendance upon the sanctuary. They will also to some extent lead others of the families to which they belong, to the house of God. A large Sabbath school will generally secure a large congregation.

The Sabbath school has an intimate connection with the prosperity of the church. The number of those

who unite with the church will bear a pretty regular ratio to the number instructed in the Sabbath school. In respect to this matter, the history of most communities is similar. As illustrating the position taken, I give some facts in the history of the Sabbath school in Chaplin, Connecticut, kindly furnished by Dea. Kingsbury.

The first organization of this school was in May, 1821. It numbered ninety-five scholars. Taking a review in 1851, thirty years afterwards, it was found that only twenty of the original Sabbath school were then in Chaplin. Fifteen of the number, six males and nine females, were members of the Chaplin church. Of the remaining seventy-five, twenty-three, about one third, had died. Fifty-one have made a profession of religion since. Forty-three of these joined the Chaplin church, and eight were known to have joined other churches. From the records of the Sabbath school and church, from 1851 to 1860, I found about the same proportion of those who had united with the church had been connected with this or with some other Sabbath school.

The facts here stated in reference to the influence of the Sabbath school in Chaplin will be found to be generally true in reference to its influence in other places. In most places the members of the church have been brought from the Sabbath schools. And the number of these members is proportional to the number of children and youth who have received Sabbath school instruction. If such be the case, no parent, no Christian, no lover of souls should be indifferent to this institution. Each and all interested in the public worship of God

and in the salvation of souls, should esteem it a privilege to engage in Sabbath school effort, and there should be no lack of laborers in any department of this work of the Lord. Only let the church be alive to duty, and disposed to improve their talents and opportunities to do good, and such will be the case. Such a thing as reluctance to engage in efforts to gather in children, or, if needed, to fill the office of teacher, is indicative of a want of consideration about the importance of the Sabbath school, or of a low state of piety.

There are few congregations and churches which might not be enlarged by more persevering labors for the growth and efficiency of the Sabbath schools connected with them.

In a town where I am acquainted, the congregation for years had been small and stationary. Around the meeting-house, within a distance convenient for the people to attend public worship, was a population more than sufficient to fill it. Not long since, after the importance of such a movement was set before them, a teacher, and some of the more influential members of the church, went out and labored to gather the children of all the families, whether rich or poor, to the Sabbath school and to public worship. As the result, the congregation was enlarged by more than one third, and the house of God well filled upon the Sabbath.

## WHY AND HOW THE WHOLE CHURCH SHOULD BE ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN THE SABBATH SCHOOL.

THE intellectual and moral improvement of the young, concerns every citizen. It is essential to the well-being of society. Whatever, therefore, tends to secure this object, deserves a place in the regards of parents and philanthropists. If we consider the cultivation of both the mind and the heart, we must give a prominent place to the Sabbath school as the instrument. If the pupil is properly attended to, a year's attendance upon the Sabbath school will do more for intellectual improvement than a term at the common school. Then the recognition of the Sabbath, the study of the word of God, the influence of the Spirit, which pervades the Sabbath school, the prayers and praises intermingled with its exercises, all have an elevating moral tendency. Rarely will those who for any length of time regularly attend the Sabbath school, go the downward path of vice and crime, drag out their lives in prison or end them on the gallows. General Harrison, once president of the United States, viewed Sabbath schools as an efficient means of promoting good morals. On one occasion, when he was training his grape-vines with his gardener, the latter remarked that there would be no use in training the vines, or in taking such pains with them, for the boys would only come on Sunday when the people were in church, and steal the grapes. He suggested to the general that he should secure a watch to guard them. But he replied, "Better procure a faithful Sabbath school

teacher. A guard may, indeed, protect the grapes, but a Sunday-school teacher will take care of the grapes and the boys too."

"One of the most profound thinkers and experienced writers in our country, under date of December 4, 1860, writes as follows :

"According to my views, the Sunday-school in some form needs the direct co-operation of every professing Christian. The children and youth being by far the majority of the moral creatures on the face of the globe, proper attention to them should be among the first and most profound interests of the church, and would demand a measure of labor and forethought far exceeding that now bestowed on any province of church interests.

"There should be no family or household in the country or town in which a child or ignorant adult is found, which should not be the object of direct systematic attention, nor should any time or pains be spared to secure to them the advantages of Christian instruction and oversight.

"I must insist upon it that the germ of all modern movements for the relief of social ills, the enlightenment of ignorance, the suppression of vice, the correction of error, and the diffusion of Christian sympathy, lies in the Sunday-school ; and might, with proper effort and with a promised blessing, be brought to bear fruit thirty, sixty, and even an hundred fold, beyond the present.

"Are not these views worthy of the most earnest consideration of every church ? With the Sunday-school, not as an appendix to the church, but as a component

vital part of it, in fact the working field of the church, the grand training field of the church, in all efforts at home evangelization, with every member called into action and assigned to the specific field of labor to which they are adapted, and called to a particular account for the manner and success of its performance, what, we ask, might not be accomplished? It will not be understood, of course, that every member is adapted at once to be a select Sabbath school teacher, or a visitor to well-to-do families; but in a church of two hundred members, forty or fifty may be selected to fill the post of teachers or some of the officers. From forty to eighty may be chosen to visit regularly the families in each district around the church, as they are assigned them. These visitors can supply the lack of church and Sabbath school privileges, as far as possible, to those children and adults who can not at once be persuaded to attend these institutions. After this there should remain from forty to eighty members that should be seated as learners in the senior or adult classes in the school, in order to the more perfect learning of gospel-truths, and training for service, and by their presence and faithfulness to give character and position to these senior classes, thus enabling them better to reach those that are without."

Besides, Sabbath schools tend to make persons intelligent and stable Christians. Those who attend upon them before conversion, obtain a knowledge of divine truth, which is of great service to them when they experience religion. And after conversion, there is no

better place to grow in divine knowledge than in the Sabbath school, in the capacity of either teacher or scholar. The study of the Scriptures, as there systematically pursued, is the very thing that young converts and even older Christians need, to comply with the injunction of the apostle, to add to virtue knowledge, and to be able to abound in knowledge and in all judgment. That development of Christian character which a diligent attendance upon the Sabbath school effects, is greatly needed in the churches universally. They who neglect to connect themselves in some way with the Sabbath school, fail to improve some of their most precious opportunities to do and get good.

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#### HINTS TO SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHERS.

“WHATEVER is worth doing is worth doing well.” Especially is this maxim to be regarded by those laboring in the vineyard of the Lord. Let the Sabbath school teacher give heed to it. If actuated by such motives as should influence him, he goes in obedience to the call, “Go work in my vineyard.” He is to receive his reward from Christ in spiritual things. If he is faithful, that reward will be glorious. What, then, constitutes a faithful Sabbath school teacher?

1. The same things are requisite to make a good Sabbath school teacher which are to make a good teacher in any art or science.

The first thing is a thorough knowledge of the subject to be taught. A thorough knowledge of a subject



makes it interesting to a teacher. It enables him to present it in simplicity and perspicuity to others. It enables him to explain it with variety of illustrations. More teachers fail, perhaps, from want of intellectual preparation, from neglecting to study and understand the lesson, than from any other cause. Another requisite is thoroughness. A teacher should so explain his subject, so remove difficulties from it, that the attentive scholar can not fail to understand it. Thorough instruction upon any subject will enable the learner to explain it to others. A teacher who fails to impart to a pupil a clear understanding of a subject, who leaves him still in difficulties respecting it, accomplishes but little good.

A deep and heartfelt interest in the subject which he teaches should characterize the teacher. All the great teachers who have exercised a mighty influence upon the world through their art, have been enthusiasts in the subjects which they have taught. They have sought to be masters in their art or science, and to give it a ruling influence in the minds of others. Such was Aristotle, Socrates and Plato. Such should be the Sabbath school teacher. Then will he not fail to awaken an interest in the minds of those whom he instructs.

In order to success, the teacher must make timely preparation for his work. Though a teacher may be familiar with a lesson to be recited, he should not come before his class to hear it without looking it over to refresh his mind and prepare illustrations to explain and enforce it. Said the venerable Dr. Beecher, in some

words of advice to a young minister, "I never preach a second time from one of my skeletons without revising the plan and getting out a new edition of it." The teacher should not fail to make some preparation to appear before his class.

Preparation for the class should be begun on the evening of the Sabbath preceding that on which the class is to be instructed. "It is said of the celebrated Dr. Dick, the fellow-student of Robert Hall, and the author of one of the best systems of theology, that his discourses for the Sabbath were begun on the evening of the Sabbath preceding that on which they were delivered. The writer is acquainted with a living minister whom he once heard remark, that he rarely closed his eyes to rest on a Lord's Day evening without anxiously turning his thoughts to the inquiry, 'What shall be the subject of my discourse for the next Sabbath?' Nor was he satisfied until he had selected it; and when he had selected it, it became the burden of his thoughts, his studies, his prayers, and often of his conversation for the remainder of the week." This is a good example of diligence for the Sabbath school teacher to imitate. In an address to a Sabbath school concert in Brooklyn, N. Y., Mr. Wells, a distinguished Sabbath school teacher, remarked, "I commenced my lesson for next Sabbath last evening. I hope you have all commenced your lessons for the next Sabbath." It is impossible to teach with much profit to yourself or your class, if you commence the study of your lesson as late as Saturday night or Sabbath morning.

The following plan for the study of the lesson is recommended by Mr. Pardee: "First of all, read over the lesson. Get one or two impressive thoughts. Then pray over it. The Great Spirit can illuminate the mind, taking the things of Christ and showing them unto you. Then examine it and get the references. Then consult commentaries, histories, or whatever helps you can find. When you get the main thoughts or the subordinate thoughts in a lesson, the next thing is to be able to illustrate them. Be thinking over the lesson during the week, and strive to get illustrations for every thought and for every pupil."

There is in every lesson a leading idea. This is the key to the lesson. This should be carried to the class and pressed upon them. Some superintendents make a statement of it to the school. Mr. Wells, to whom we have alluded, has a blackboard, and writes the leading idea where all the school can read it. Suppose, for example, the lesson were the parable of the talents. The leading idea might be thus expressed:

Our character and destiny depend not upon the amount, but upon the use made of what is intrusted to us.

Another requisite in a Sabbath school teacher is constancy. Nothing but unavoidable hindrances should keep a teacher away from his class. A class whose teacher is inconstant will greatly suffer, and will soon be inconstant themselves. There is a propriety in introducing the following anecdote here:

When Mr. Frelinghuysen was thought of for member

of Congress, he expressed to some of his neighbors a doubt whether he had better run as candidate, as he should have to leave his Bible class if elected. He was influenced to do so only by being persuaded that men of principle and fidelity were needed in the offices of the country, and that it would be more difficult to find a man suitable for a representative than it would be to find some one who could take his Bible class. If all Sabbath school teachers had such a sense of the importance of being with their classes, there would be but few inconstant teachers.

The Sabbath school teacher should strive to adorn himself with every Christian grace and virtue. He should drink deeply of the spirit of his Master, in consecration to God and in love to souls. By his character and spirit he exerts an influence over his class as well as by the instruction which he gives.

Another thing essential to a good Sabbath school teacher is a spirit of prayer. He should not only be a praying man, but he should pray especially for those whom he instructs in divine truth. He should daily bear them each on his heart before the throne of grace. The grand object of the instruction which he imparts is the conversion of souls. If he makes that his aim, it will lead him to earnest prayer to God for a blessing on those committed to his charge. Sabbath school teachers need to pray more ; then they will expect more, and see more blessed results of their labors.

Another thing requisite in a Sabbath school teacher is perseverance. Though the Sabbath school is the

most encouraging field for religious effort, yet it is not without such discouragements as call for faith and perseverance. The best Sabbath school teachers have sometimes to labor long before they secure good order and good attention in their classes. But perseverance conquers all things. One motto of the Sabbath school teacher should be, "Let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not." If faithful, the Sabbath school teacher will not be without his reward. He will be held in grateful remembrance by those whose minds he impresses with divine things, or whom he leads to the Saviour. A clergyman of my acquaintance, now over forty years of age, enjoyed, when a youth, the instructions of a faithful Sabbath school teacher. He was a man of faith and prayer. He used to meet his class with respect and a loving smile. He taught them the truth as it is in Jesus. Whenever that clergyman visits his native place, and goes, where his dear friends slumber in the dust, to recall blessed recollections, he lingers around the grave of his Sabbath school teacher, and while he drops a tear as he reads the inscription on his gravestone, he also sends up to God the gratitude of his heart, that he ever came under the influence of such a teacher.

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#### TEACHERS' WORK OUT OF THE SABBATH SCHOOL.

Much may be accomplished by Sabbath school teachers outside the Sabbath school. We would say to them, Use means to secure and retain the affections of

the children. Make them love you, and then your instructions will be of immensely greater value. Meet them in the street with a gracious smile, or a kind and tender inquiry. Converse with them on topics level with their capacities. Continually aim to teach them. Teach them any thing that is worth knowing, in any department of knowledge, and they will love you the more for the effort. Every interview, however short, will weave another wreath of affection around you, and strengthen the tie of your mutual union. If circumstances allow, invite them occasionally to visit you. Let your intercourse with them, during the week, wherever you meet them, be in keeping with your tenderest intercourse on the Sabbath.

Teachers should visit their classes. When members of a class are absent for a time, they should be visited, and occasionally, every member of a class should be visited. This visitation affords the teacher an opportunity to do good to the family to which the scholar belongs. It tends to secure for the teacher the sympathy of parents. It enables the teacher to understand something of the influences which surround the scholar at home, and furnishes him with illustrations of truth which will be forcible to him. Visitation is one of the most efficient means of promoting the spiritual benefit of scholars. In a Sabbath school convention at Schenectady, Mr. Wells remarked, "Not long ago, I met a teacher of a Sunday-school in New York, on a boat going up the Hudson river. Upon inquiry, I found she was going sixty miles to visit a scholar of her's, who

had left her class a short time before, and who, as she thought, was beginning to be interested in the subject of religion. She hardly knew where to stay at night, for it was a strange place to her, but she said she could find a place. She met her scholar in the road before she was gone to the house, and there the child unburdened her little heart, and said she was so glad to see her, that she had no one to sympathize with her, and then, with tears, exclaimed, 'O, teacher, I want to be a Christian.' That was a visit richly rewarded to that teacher's heart. Almost all her scholars in a class of twenty-five were converted. She visits, visits, visits. In one school she has taught about twenty years, and one after another of her classes have been brought to Christ. Some time since she informed me she had been to see a young girl who was in a consumption, who was interested about her soul. For seven or eight visits she could not get a word of private conversation with her; but at last her efforts were crowned with success. I saw that teacher about a month ago, and with beaming face she said to me, 'O, I have seen Julia, and at last have found her alone. I prayed with her, and for the first time her heart seemed affected. I never before could get a word from her as to her state of mind, but now she put her arms around my neck, and said, O, I do long to be a Christian.' "

The writer commenced his labors in a western city. Soon after he began to preach, there was an appearance of a revival of religion. An inquiry meeting was appointed, and those who were anxious about their souls,

who desired to seek salvation, were invited to attend. A Sabbath school teacher, who felt anxious for the salvation of her class, began to visit them. And when the evening for the inquiry meeting arrived, she came with two of her scholars. She continued the work until the last of the six were brought into the inquiry meeting. The whole class were converted, and came into the church together.

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#### ENCOURAGEMENTS TO SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHERS.

ONE encouragement to Sabbath school teachers is, that the mind is more susceptible to impressions in childhood than at any other period of life. Early impressions are the most deep and lasting. Indeed, it is doubtful if early impressions are ever effaced.

Once a little boy was placed in charge of his sister. She sat amusing him under a shady elm. All at once their attention was arrested by the sound of the tolling bell. "What is that bell for?" inquired the little boy. "It is to let us know that some one is dead," replied his sister. "We all must die. Good people, when they die, go to heaven, a place of happiness. Wicked people, when they die, go to hell, a lake that burns with fire and brimstone forever." These words made an impression upon the mind of that little boy, which has never been lost. He ever afterwards felt that he must be good or be lost. From that time he was much troubled at the thought of death, until by repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, he entertained the hope that when he died he should be admit-



ted to heaven. Then he consecrated himself to the work of proclaiming the gospel to others. Plant the truth in the minds of the young, and it will yield a plentiful harvest of righteousness.

The results of Sabbath school teaching are the most encouraging to teachers. They are truly wonderful.

It is said of the missionaries who have gone from Great Britain to heathen nations, nineteen-twentieths received their first impression in the Sabbath school, and that of the evangelical ministers of England who are under forty years of age, two-thirds became pious at these schools. Henderson and Patterson, who have, through their indefatigable labors and holy zeal, done such wonders in the Bible cause, received their first religious impressions at the Sabbath school. The celebrated Morrison, missionary to the vast empire of China, who has translated the Bible into that most difficult language, is another star which arose from this institution.

Says one writer: "Of a school within our knowledge, which was established in 1829, fourteen teachers have labored, only three of whom were professors at the commencement. Of these, all but one are now professors. Of two hundred children connected with the same school, during the same time, one hundred and thirty-three profess to have become converted to the faith of the gospel."

In the July number of the "Oberlin Evangelist," for 1858, the interesting fact is stated, that more than half the net increase of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States, the past year, was from the Sabbath

school; there having been seventeen thousand four hundred and ninety-four conversions in the Sabbath schools reported. In the last eight years, sixty-four thousand additions to the church have been reported from the Sabbath schools, being over one-eighth of the entire membership of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States.

A large proportion of the revivals with which the church is blessed, commence in the Sabbath school. In this field of labor, "he that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

O, what a privilege to be permitted to labor in the capacity of Sabbath school teacher. The teacher whose heart is in his work, who prepares himself for it, who comes before his class that he may implant in their minds God's truth, and win them to Christ, will be owned of the Great Teacher; and when the fruit of his labors shall be gathered to eternal life, will bless that grace which has enabled and inclined him to labor in the Sabbath school.

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#### THOUGHTS IN REFERENCE TO THE MANAGEMENT OF SABBATH SCHOOLS.

I do not design to specify what should be the exercise of the Sabbath school. They must vary according to circumstances, especially according to the time allotted to them. But when an hour can be spent in the exercises of the Sabbath school, it is a good arrangement to .

have reading of the Scriptures, singing and prayer at the opening of the school, and singing at the close.

The prayer should be brief, and especially for the Sabbath school. There is so much to be sought for the Sabbath school,—as its increase, the blessing of God upon the superintendent, teachers and scholars, the influence of the Holy Spirit to enable all to understand and profit by the lesson, and cases of sickness and death,—that there is no need to introduce in prayer any thing foreign to the Sabbath school. The prayer should be one in which all the school could unite as an expression of their wants. Long prayers, for various objects, are out of place in opening a Sabbath school.

Another thing which requires the special consideration of superintendents, is attention to new scholars. This is the most important duty of the day. The first visit of boys and girls to the Sabbath school may make a lasting impression. If no attention is paid to them, they may imbibe an insuperable prejudice against the Sabbath school. I have known instances in which members of the church have succeeded in persuading parents to send their children to the Sabbath school; but when the children came, they were left to sit, almost through the exercises of the school, without any notice being taken of them. The consequence was, they ceased to come. They imbibed a dislike to Sabbath schools. Be particular to treat new scholars with attention. Go and take the little boy or girl by the hand, and kindly address them: “Do you want to come to our Sabbath school? Will you be a good boy,

or girl?" Then go to some teacher and introduce him, saying, "Here is Johnny. He would like to come to our Sabbath school. He says he will be a good boy. Will you teach him?" Thus the little boy would be led to feel that it was a privilege to go to the Sabbath school. He would often think of the kind friends who so kindly noticed him there. Thus he would not only become attached to the Sabbath school, but prepared to profit by it.

## PART VIII.

### MISSIONS.

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#### THE IMPORTANCE OF MISSIONS.

THE chief object of missions is to save the souls of men lost in sin. It is true, that the salvation of the gospel brings with it every other blessing. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Still, the great aim of the gospel is the salvation of the lost. It is the value of the soul which gives its great importance to the work of missions. For a moment, then, contemplate it, not to comprehend it, but to receive a new impulse toward the great work of missions.

The value of the soul appears from its capacities for improvement. It is capable of endless improvement in knowledge. Instead of ever arriving at that degree of knowledge which renders farther progress impracticable, every step of improvement in knowledge prepares the way for farther advancement. After Newton had made his wonderful discoveries of the extent and laws of the material universe, he seemed to himself like a child gathering pebbles upon the sea-shore. A vast ocean of knowledge, unexplored, stretched out before him. What is all this world, compared with a mind advanced in knowledge like that of Newton, Bacon, Watts and Chalmers! Yet the gospel will elevate all who receive its blessings to far higher attainments in knowledge. The period will arrive when the weakest saint will have

attained a degree of knowledge superior to that which the highest archangel now possesses, and still its progress in knowledge will be but just begun. The infinite and unexplored will still be opening and opening to view. What, then, is the worth of all sublunary things compared with the soul!

The soul of man is capable of endless progress in holiness as well as in knowledge. As it advances in the knowledge of the great Eternal, the strength and fervor of its purposes and affections will increase. It will be rising upward continually toward the great ocean of eternal purity. O, who can estimate the value of a soul arrived at such holiness as Paul, Whitefield, Wesley, Edwards and Payson possessed! But the period will arrive when the weakest saint will have attained a degree of holiness superior to that which the combined holiness of all created beings would make, and still its progress will be but just begun.

The soul of man is likewise capable of endless improvement in happiness. As its capacities of knowledge and holiness expand, its delight in God and in all holy objects and exercises will increase. When it shall have experienced an amount of happiness equal to that which all created intelligences have enjoyed, its bliss will be but just begun.

But if the soul is lost, the reverse of all that has been said of its holiness and happiness will take place. As it advances in knowledge, it will be only to become more wicked and miserable. Suppose a soul were doomed to experience every pain, every pang of sorrow

which all created beings have yet suffered, how awful would be the doom! Still, this would be but the beginning of what will be suffered by a lost soul.

The value of the soul appears from what has been done to redeem it. Its redemption occupied the thoughts of the Infinite Jehovah from eternity. Infinite was the price paid to accomplish it. No human being could give a ransom for it. The highest archangel could not pay the price of its redemption. All created beings combined could not deliver it from destruction. The second person of the Trinity, the Eternal Son, was the only being who could redeem it. To accomplish this, he left the glory which he had with the Father, took upon himself the form of a servant, suffered and died the ignominious death of the cross. What does all this world appear, compared with one soul, as its worth is proclaimed from Calvary!

The soul appears precious when compared with other things. Look back upon the past. What appear the renown of heroes, the laurels of orators and poets, the splendor and magnificence of riches, the mirth and pleasure of the worldling? How brilliant were these in Tyre, and Greece, and Rome! But where are they now? But O, the souls of those who figured in them, could they have been redeemed, how infinitely precious compared with all these things! All other things than the blessings which salvation brings to the immortal soul are uncertain, unsatisfying, transitory. The joys they give are momentary. Our life itself is a vapor that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth

away. Fill your mind with the largest idea of all worldly good. Then come and stand by the bed of death. What now does it all appear? Lay it in the balance with the redemption of the soul, and what is it? You must for the moment be convinced that all things are loss compared with the salvation of the soul.

“Were there but one soul destitute of the gospel, and that soul situated on some distant island, such that it would take all the wealth of all the world to send the gospel to it, the work ought to be done.” So teaches the example of Christ. “Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye, through his poverty, might be rich.” Were the choice submitted to a benevolent person, whether to secure all the riches of the world, or to be instrumental of saving a soul, there could not be a moment’s hesitancy in favor of the latter.

But there are six hundred millions of human beings on earth, with souls of such priceless value, who know nothing of God, or of Jesus Christ whom he hath sent. Standing hold of each other’s hands, they would reach twenty-five times round the earth. Allowing thirty years to a generation, they are passing into eternity at the rate of twenty millions annually. That would be nearly four hundred thousand a week. Now do the church feel the importance of enlightening this vast mass of human beings? Are they acting according to the interests at stake?

The aim of the church in all her efforts is one. That is, that the kingdom of God may come, and his will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Yet there are some



operations of the church which look more directly at the conversion of the world to God than others. This is emphatically true of foreign missions. They aim at nothing less than the subjugation of the whole evangelized world to Christ. When their object shall have been accomplished, then idolatry, with all its darkness and wickedness, its human sacrifices, its infanticide and all its train of cruelties, will have passed away. Then will knowledge and liberty, social refinement and happiness, the hopes and consolations of the gospel here, and its final salvation, be enjoyed by all flesh. No object more glorious and important could be conceived of by man, or prosecuted by any created intelligence. It calls for the co-operation of every child of God. Who, without being destitute of love to both God and man, can stand aloof while such a work is going on to its accomplishment? Who can set up his own interest, or even the interest of a nation, in competition with this, and not be blinded and hardened in sin?

Another thing, showing the importance of missions, is the good they have accomplished.

“The church began in an upper room in Jerusalem, and from that centre it has, by missionary labors, overspread the world. The apostles were in the truest sense missionaries. They traveled every where throughout the Roman Empire, preaching the gospel and establishing churches. According to the early accounts which we have of apostolic labors, Saint Thomas established Christianity on the coast of India, Saint Peter at Babylon, Saint Paul in Spain. These were probably

the extreme points reached by the missionary efforts of the apostolic age. The apostles marked out, as it were, the work which it would require three centuries of labor to accomplish. Between these points, in Britain, on the Rhine, the Danube, the Caspian and the Persian Gulf, and in Northern Africa, the followers of the apostles labored diligently in consolidating and extending the influence of the Christian religion, until, at the close of the fourth century, it had leavened the whole mass of the Roman Empire. Never was there such a revolution as was there effected, and never was there so sublime a spectacle as the Christian church at that time exhibited. She was in the midst of the ruins of the old world; old philosophies, and art and literature, and manners and customs, and social and political institutions, and forms of religion, all were broken and scattered by the destroyer, and the church found herself, face to face, with that world of barbarians which, for generation after generation, dashed itself, like the surges of a mighty ocean, upon the provinces of Rome. A little later, and the church was called to contend with the false prophet, whose armies had desolated the once flourishing churches of Africa and the East. But amid such dangers and difficulties as these, her missionary zeal did not falter. Not content to hold the ground already won, or to regain that which had been lost, she went forth to new conquests. Great Britain and Ireland sent forth from their Christian institutions those who preached Christ to the Gothic tribes; Denmark, Norway and Sweden were rescued from Paganism.

The immense tribes of Scandinavia, by the potent labors of the Greek and Latin churches, were at length won to the faith ; and the close of the thirteenth century beheld Europe, throughout its whole extent, entirely emancipated at once from barbarism and idolatry.

“Since then, and particularly since the Reformation, missionaries have extended their labors to every part of the globe, and have planted every-where the seeds of future Christian communities and nations. And the result of all this is, that Christian civilization now holds the destinies of the world in its hands. On looking back upon the history of Christianity, and endeavoring to indicate its progress by numbers, we shall find, according to Mr. Sharon Turner, the celebrated historian, that at the close of the first century it had reached the number of 500,000 ; in the fifth, 15,000,000 ; in the fifteenth, 100,000,000 ; in the eighteenth, 200,000,000 ; in the first half of the nineteenth century, 300,000,000.

“I am aware that there is another side to this picture, and that the progress of Christianity, in many of its aspects, presents too much occasion for mortification and regret. The church itself has, for age after age, been corrupt, whole nations have relapsed from the faith, vast numbers of nominal Christians have been any thing but real Christians ; stupendous difficulties oppose the progress of the gospel to-day in heathen lands. All this I would with candor admit. It is not the fault of Christianity. It is the fact only because even the divine religion can not at once subdue the obduracy and selfishness of man. But what I say is this, and it is a truth

which should be graven upon every Christian heart, that for the whole progress of Christianity, and for all it is in the world to-day, we are indebted ultimately to missionary labors and sacrifices. Has Christianity touched with a sanctifying power any of the islands of the sea? Has it trodden the burning sands of Africa, and rescued any of its oppressed sons from the bondage of sin? Has it walked upon the shores of China, and patiently toiled there, wasting in love and sacrifice to win souls to Him who gave the most glorious example of both? Has it spoken to any of the swarthy millions of India, and redeemed any of them from the merciless superstition of their race? Has it warmed the inhabitants of Iceland and Greenland with the glow of the love of Christ? Has it done any thing for Italy and Germany, and France, and Russia, and England? Has it done any thing for us? Are we any happier to-day than were the Pagan races from which we descend? Is there such a thing in the world as Christian civilization? Is there any influence constantly becoming more powerful, which softens manners, refines life, gives consolation in sorrow, inspires hopes full of immortality? Then let me say, It is missionary labor to which we are indebted for it all. And if, in the distant future, Africa and China shall become, as they certainly will, the home of Christian nations, and the birth-place of millions of souls for the kingdom of heaven, it will be more true of them than it is of us, that Christian missions have laid the foundation of the work." It is not difficult to trace our immediate indebtedness to missions.

Our ancestors of the British Isles, the fathers and mothers from whom we descended, were given to the most debasing idolatry. Their priests, if such they could be called, were denominated Druids. They dwelt in thick forests and caverns, away from the abodes of the people. They kept their practices a profound secret, that they might strike the people with more profound awe. They were said to be worshipers of the oak, and the mistletoe, a small shrub growing upon its branches. They performed their rites in dense groves, and sometimes in temples or inclosures formed of massive stones. To impart an idea of the dreadful nature of their rites, it will be enough to state one feature of them,—the sacrifice of human victims. That this was their practice, is affirmed by all the credible historians who have treated upon the subject. Cæsar, speaking of the inhabitants of Gaul and Britain, says: “They are much addicted to superstition, and for this cause, those who are afflicted with a dangerous disease often sacrifice a man for their recovery. In this business they employ the ministry of the Druids, because they have declared that the anger of the immortal gods can not be appeased, so as to spare the life of one man but by the life of another.”

“Pliny asserts that they consider it a part of their most solemn and most obligatory religion to put men to death, and to feed upon their dead bodies they esteemed most wholesome. The human victims are in general selected from among the criminals, but when none of these were to be had, they did not scruple to sacrifice innocent persons.”

The "Edinburgh Encyclopedia" gives the following account: "The most horrid of the superstitions of the Druids consisted in sacrifices. The victim or victims, for there were sometimes several, were inclosed in a large figure resembling a man, formed of osier twigs; or according to some authors, they were simply wrapped round with hay. In this state fire was applied, and they were reduced to ashes. The people were so devoted to this shocking custom of human sacrifices, that no business of any moment was transacted among them without being prefaced by the blood of men. The altars where these offerings were made, were far removed from the common resorts of mankind, being situated in the depth of woods, that the surrounding gloom might add to the horror of the operation, and give a reverence to the place and the proceeding." In these fearful superstitions and cruelties we should have been plunged, had not the gospel come to our fathers. But early in the progress of Christianity, probably in the first century, men imbued with the love of Christ, in obedience to his last command, went to the British Isles and erected the standard of the cross. The light of the gospel penetrated that dark land. Hence our civilization, our social, civil and religious privileges, and our immortal hopes. For all, so far as instrumentality is concerned, we are indebted to Christian missions. The debt we owe to them we can never repay. The good which we have received from Christian missions should induce us to support them, and as much as in us lies, to plant them in all the dark corners of the earth. What a wrong it would have

been to us if Christians, having the means, had not sent the gospel to our ancestors! What a wrong it will be to the descendants of the Pagan nations, now on the stage, if we do not send to them the gospel!

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ENGAGING IN THE WORK OF MISSIONS, THE DUTY OF ALL CHRISTIANS.

THE work of missions is of divine appointment. It is not left optional<sup>h</sup> with Christians to engage or not in sending the gospel to the heathen nations. It is a work assigned to them and enjoined upon them. It is a work enforced by the example of inspired men, and of the churches under their oversight. The true spirit of Christianity is a missionary spirit. It is the spirit of Christianity to prize the blessings of experimental religion,—the blessings which come to us in the salvation of the gospel,—above any and all other good. Paul speaks the feeling of all true Christians: “I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ.” All true Christians have something of the spirit of Christ. That is a spirit of love. “The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost.” Those who follow him must devote themselves to the same work. The blessings which he purchased, by his agony upon the cross, they must be ready to spread throughout the world. To have the spirit of Christ, and do nothing to make known the way of salvation to heathen nations, is an impossibility. One of the first longings of the new-born soul is, that all men

may know Christ, and him crucified. The gospel enjoins upon all Christians the work of missions. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them." With their present feelings, Christians would judge that if they themselves were in the condition of the heathen, it would be the duty of those enjoying the gospel, to send it to them, regardless of expense, and without delay.

The work of missions is specifically enjoined upon Christians. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."—Mark 16: 15. "Go ye therefore teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."—Matt. 28: 19, 20.

"For whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."—Rom. 10: 13–17.



In his epistle to Gaius, John speaks of those who had devoted themselves to the work of preaching the gospel among the Gentiles, taking nothing from them, but receiving their support from the more enlightened churches among the Jews. He recommends them to the assistance of Gaius. "Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers; which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well: because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellow-helpers to the truth."

Let none flatter themselves that they are the followers of Christ, and shall enjoy his presence in heaven, unless they are heart and hand engaged in spreading the gospel throughout the world. Christ tasted death for every man, and the heathen are perishing for lack of vision, yet probably half the members of the church are doing nothing to obey the last command of the Saviour. Let me ask such to reflect upon the following words of Judson:

"But let me now submit that the command can be obeyed by every believer, that it is of universal obligation, and that no profession ought to be regarded as sincere, no love to the Saviour genuine, unless it be attended with a sincere endeavor to obey. But you will reply, How can I, unqualified and encumbered as I am, arise, and go forth into the wide world, and proclaim the gospel? Please to remember, that all great public

undertakings are accomplished by a combination of various agencies. In commerce and in war, for instance, some agents are necessarily employed at home, and some abroad, some at the head-quarters, and some on distant expeditions, but however differently employed, and in whatever places, they are all interested, and all share the glory and the gain. So in the missionary enterprise, the work to be accomplished is the universal preaching of the gospel, and the conversion of the world to the Christian faith; and in order to this, some must go, and some must send and sustain them that go. 'How can they hear without a preacher? and how can they preach, except they be sent?' Those who remain at home, and labor to send and sustain those that go, are as really employed in the work, and do as really obey the Saviour's command, as those who go in their own persons. See you not, then, that the great command can be obeyed, and is actually binding on every soul? Feel you not, that you are under obligation to do your utmost to secure that object at which the Saviour aimed, when he gave the command? Is it possible that there is one professing Christian to whom it may be said, that you have never laid this command to heart, or made any very serious effort to obey it? If so, how can you hope that your love to the Saviour is any thing more than empty profession? How is it possible that you love the Saviour, and yet feel no interest in that object on which his heart is set? What! love the Saviour who bled and died for this cause, and yet spend your whole existence on earth in toiling for

your own sustenance, and gratification, and vain glory! O, that dread tribunal to which we are hastening! Souls stripped of all disguise there,—the final Judge a consuming fire.” “Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any evil way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

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#### THE DUTY OF THE CHURCH IN RELATION TO MISSIONS.

THERE is a duty for every Christian to perform toward the heathen. That great multitude of human beings who are sitting in darkness, Christians must meet at the judgment seat of Christ. How important the inquiry, then, What can and ought Christians to do for heathen nations?

Christians ought to feel for them. They should extend to them love and compassion.

“Pity the nations, O our God,  
Constrain the earth to come,  
Send thy victorious word abroad,  
And bring the nations home.”

The feeling expressed in these lines gushed forth from the heart of a Christian, while sitting at the table of the Lord, and reflecting upon the gospel which had enlightened him, and the grace which had placed him among the children of God. This feeling should be nurtured in every Christian heart. The church must feel suitable compassion for the heathen, before she will make those sacrifices and put forth those efforts which are

needful to send the gospel to them. Only let such love and pity as Christ felt towards a lost world, dwell in the hearts of Christians generally, and soon the gospel would be proclaimed among all nations.

“Oh! for God-like pity, moving all who bear the Saviour’s name,  
Then should none—Barbarian, Moslem—for the gospel plead in vain.”

Christians ought greatly to enlarge their operations for evangelizing the heathen nations.

The pagan world is reached by the same means which are employed to evangelize communities in nominally Christian lands. The gospel must be preached to them. Personal effort must be put forth to enlighten them and persuade them to be reconciled to God. The children and youth must be instructed in common and in Sabbath schools. The Bible and religious books and tracts must be circulated among the people. When this labor is performed among them, and the Spirit from on high visits them, then will the heathen turn from their idols to serve the living God. The result of missionary labor, like that of all other labor in the cause of God, has been proportional to the amount performed. An examination of modern missions shows that the money and effort expended in heathen nations, has resulted in bringing to a saving knowledge of the truth as many, at least, as the same amount of money and effort expended in Christian nations. Now, allowing that an equal success shall attend the means employed in the future as in the past, how plain it appears, that the amount of labor performed for the evangelization of

heathen nations, must be as great as what is requisite in nominally Christian communities at home. But in New England, with a population less than four millions, there are more than three thousand ministers, and Christian laymen doing as much, at least, as the ministers, for the religious welfare of the people. Put the missionaries from all Christian lands together, and the number would not be equal to the ministers of New England. Can we consider the command of the Saviour, to "preach the gospel to every creature," obeyed, while the means employed for the accomplishment of the object are so inadequate, or while the church fails to exert herself to the utmost to employ adequate means? At the present rate of effort, the church can hardly be said to be in earnest in the work of the world's conversion. Would a nation be in earnest who should send an army of a thousand men, where one of a hundred thousand was needed? True, it is said "a work well begun is half done." True it is, that those who go forth will not labor in vain if they are instrumental of bringing one heathen home to God. But so far as the conversion of the heathen nations is concerned, she can not be said to be in earnest until the laborers in the missionary field are greatly increased. Are you willing to say, *practically*, Let the means for the conversion of the heathen nations *be increased*? Will you set the example of doing more for this work? Will you deny yourself in order to help this cause? Will you exert your influence to increase the missionary spirit among Christians?

"How greatly must laborers be multiplied ere the

precious gospel be preached to every creature. But that the heralds of the cross may be multiplied and sent forth every-where with the messages of salvation, Christians must dedicate to the service of God their time, talents, health, skill, and strength,—all that they have and all that they are. They must cheerfully make great sacrifices to train up, send forth, and sustain those who are willing to go and labor, to secure to the Lord Jesus Christ the ends of the earth, redeemed by his precious blood.”

Christians should consider the question, Whether it is not their duty, personally, to carry the gospel to the heathen? Though it is not desirable that any should go as missionaries, unless they feel impelled by love to Christ and love to souls, unless they would feel it a privilege to labor on heathen shores, still it is undoubtedly true, that many who remain at home ought to be missionaries. It is important, therefore, that Christians generally should consider the matter of personal duty in reference to the work of missions.

Christians must be willing to consecrate their children to the work of missions among the heathen.

“The trumpet of the gospel should be blown in every high place of Zion, and the call be made, Who will go for us? But what is the church actually doing, even now, to raise up the thousands of missionaries who ought to be sent into the fields speedily? Is she not permitting things to take pretty much their own course, without great effort, or anxiety, or thought directed to this very point? Every one who honestly pleads this

cause is authorized by the Lord Jesus to enjoin it upon the churches to bring forth the young men as workmen in this vineyard, and to enjoin it upon the young men to come forth and consecrate themselves to this work. Why should there not be a day of fasting and prayer appointed by each church, in view of the guilty and perishing condition of the world? Why should not each church take into sober consideration, What is its quota of men requisite to evangelize the world?

“To leave the work of obtaining missionaries to the slow action of education societies and agents, or to the influence which can be exerted over young men by general appeals, will fatally retard the progress of the gospel over the world. The individual branches of the church must feel a responsibility, and themselves perform an important duty. The whole must be taken up more in detail, and the appeal must be carried to the consciences of individual young men, and they be made to feel that the questions, In what manner, and to what extent they will obey the last command of Christ? are questions which they must personally, and in the fear of God, decide.

“Christians must look forward farther even than this, and parents must begin early to instruct their children in all parts of the missionary work, and train them up for bearing a part in it. Teach them to regard the conversion of the world to Christianity as the noblest work in which they can engage, and to burn with zeal to be qualified to engage in an enterprise so benevolent and honorable. Parents can, in their hearts and in

their prayers, consecrate their children to this cause, and make them feel how little the inducements of blood, and friendship, and home, are to be regarded, in view of the command of Christ, and the rescue of the nations from death in sin and woe.

“Will not ministers and churches, then, bring forth their choicest spiritual children, and consecrate them to the ministry? Will not fathers and mothers bring forth their beloved sons and daughters, and give them back to the Lord? Young men and young women are not their own; they are bought with a price; let them, therefore, glorify God with their bodies and spirits, which are his.”

Parents too often think of the missionary work as not the most honorable, benevolent and noble. The endearments of blood, and friendship, and home are esteemed by them too important to be surrendered for the command of Christ and the rescue of the nations. With such views and feelings, parents can not, will not, teach their children as they should, in reference to the missionary work. Of twenty young men at Andover, who were at the same time agitating their duty to become missionaries, all but two were opposed by their parents, and those two were the sons of widows. Parents in the church, who have professed to forsake all for Christ, have been known to affirm that they would sooner bury their children, than that they should become missionaries.

Many large churches give something of their substance to the cause of missions, but none of their sons and daughters. In such cases, there is altogether a



fault among them. They have neglected to lay all upon the altar. Let them cherish more of the Spirit of Christ, and send forth some of their members to heathen shores. Would that all our churches might be actually represented in the missionary work. Then would the sympathies, prayers, and contributions of Christians be called forth, as they never yet have been in this cause.

It is the duty of Christians to pray for those who go to heathen lands to preach the gospel. Without this, all other things will be in vain.

"Who but thou, Almighty Spirit,  
Can the heathen world reclaim?  
Men may preach, but till thou favor,  
Heathens will be still the same."

It is in answer to prayer that God makes bare his arm. And if God appears as he has done at the Sandwich Islands and among the Karens, the work of conversion among the heathen will progress with great rapidity, considering the means employed. Were a missionary from some foreign land to travel through the length and breadth of the churches at home, and find that the cause of missions was remembered at the family altar, and that in all the churches great numbers flocked together to pray for its success, he would thank God and take courage. But let him find every thing else in reference to the cause going forward prosperously, but the spirit of prayer dying out, but few gathering to call upon God for his blessing upon missionary effort, and his heart would despond and his hands hang down. You can most directly reach the heathen by earnest

prayer for the Holy Spirit to descend upon missionary laborers. If you have any right feeling in reference to the last command of Christ, you will make some effort to meet with those who assemble to pray for missions. O, when shall the time come when all Christians shall unite their prayers for the conversion of the world! It is the fault of such as stay away from concerts of prayer for the conversion of the world, that this scene is not witnessed. Yet this fault attaches to more than half the members of the church. You will certainly help forward the cause of missions, if you are always found at the place where Christians meet to pray for it, and endeavor to induce others to be there with you.

Christians can inform themselves and be prepared to enlighten others with respect to the heathen world, what has been done, is doing, and needs to be done for its evangelization. One reason, undoubtedly, why many professed Christians give nothing, and many more so little, for foreign missions, is, that they are not informed in relation to the condition of the heathen, and the work of missionaries among them. Were they well informed, they would hear the Macedonian cry, "Come over and help us." To keep the church informed upon this cause, it is a good arrangement to appoint some brother to report, at the monthly concert, in reference to each of the more important missions. Where this plan is not practicable, let each one be diligent to collect and communicate information upon the subject. This great work of missions has now created a literature. This should be in the possession of every Christian family. In the me-

morial volume of the American Board, a work which may be safely recommended to every one, is an article denominated "Resultant Literature." In that will be found a list of works pertaining to the subject of missions. Let these works be purchased as Christians possess the ability, and let them be perused in the family. Let children read the biography of such persons as Judson, Harriet Newell, and the Missionary Sisters, and they will receive impressions which will never be effaced.

## PART IX.

### MISCELLANEOUS.

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#### CHECKS UPON INFIDELITY.

ONE important means of meeting the error of infidelity, is correct sentiment among those who profess to receive the Bible as their guide. They must be united in their testimony to its authority, and in their treatment of it as the ultimate standard of truth. They must be unequivocal in their testimony to the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. There can be no doubt in the minds of any who read the history and teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ, what were his views in reference to the Holy Scriptures. Let all the leaders of the Israel of God send forth an equally distinct testimony that the Bible is the word of God. Any virtual rejection of the Bible by those who profess to embrace its instructions, tends to infidelity.

The churches can do much to check the extension of infidelity by decidedly rejecting as religious teachers those who discard the Bible as an infallible standard of truth. What is the preacher's calling, but to explain and enforce the word of God as contained in the Holy Scriptures? If the Bible is not the word of God, then the preacher has no message from God to deliver. If he has no message from God to deliver, then he is not sent of God. Fearful, then, must be the responsibility of the church which chooses as a religious teacher one who

discards the authority of the Scriptures, or their infallibility as the standard of divine truth.

An important means of meeting the error of infidelity, is the spread of a religious literature. Most of the infidelity of the land has sprung up in the minds of those who have very little if any religious reading. If those who have gone to swell the ranks of infidelity, had in early life been supplied with such works as "The Bible Not of Man," "Flavel's Method of Grace," or "Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress," or some other interesting and instructive religious works, they would have doubtless embraced the truth. But these have been wanting, and the apostles of infidelity have supplied the lack with publications prejudicial to Christianity. Every family ought to be supplied with a religious paper and with some interesting religious books, as well as the Bible. It is a day when religious books are furnished at such a low price that they ought to be considered a necessary part of household furniture. Yet there are Christian families where you may look in vain for a religious paper or any interesting religious book, where at the same time you may find papers teeming with infidel sentiments and inuendoes against Christianity and the Holy Scriptures. The press is a most potent instrument for advancing any cause, and the friends of religion ought to make the utmost use of it to supplant error, and promote the truth. Might not something, yea, much more, be done by the local churches, to supply, on some thorough and systematic plan, the population around them with the valuable works issued by the religious press?

Let the church be in earnest in this great work, as the men of the world are when they wish to awaken and move the public mind, and much would be accomplished.

Another means of restraining infidelity, is the elevation of the standing of piety in the church. It is interesting to be able to believe that the piety of the present age is doing more to meet the wants of the world than that of any age since apostolic times. But what is needed, is such a state of piety in the church as shall convince the world of the heavenly origin of our religion. True religion is something which no human power can impart. It is of God. It has a heavenly lustre and beauty when it has full possession of the powers of the soul. But by the lukewarmness and worldliness of the church, religion is often kept from the view of the world. But let the professed people of God seek first the kingdom of God and the righteousness thereof; let them be filled with love to God and to souls; let them be earnest, self-denying, strong in the faith; let them carry out the principles of religion in all their dealings with their fellow-men; let them put away sectarianism, and make the advancement of religion, the salvation of souls, the great concern; in a word, let all Christians abound in works of faith and labors of love, and there will be a power in Christian example which will counteract the leaven of error and infidelity. The church possessed of the heavenly charity of the gospel, the church consistent and in earnest in the great work which Christ has committed to her, is what is needed. If you would see

infidelity undermined, aim to bring yourself and your brethren to a higher standard of holy living.

“A young man, when about to be ordained as a Christian minister, stated that at one period of his life he had been nearly betrayed into the principles of infidelity. ‘But,’ he added, ‘there was one argument in favor of Christianity which I could never forget, and that was the consistent conduct of my own father.’”

To meet the evil of infidelity, we need powerful revivals of religion; such as have been experienced in parts of Ireland and Scotland. Such revivals show the efficacy and power of Christianity to elevate and regenerate society, and thus prove its divinity.

“The revival of the last century was the answer to the infidel cry of the day, that Christianity was to be swept away to make place for the new empire of reason. In our time a quieter and more subtle infidelity was telling of the advanced age, the decrepitude, and ultimate demise of our blessed religion. Her commission was almost expiring, her sword had no edge to pierce the well-tempered armor of modern foes. Soon her old book, instead of being the charter of universal empire, would be the curiosity of her successors, and her pulpit remembered as the oracles of Delphi or the liturgies of Thebes, or else occupied by brighter substitutes, who already, under the names of philosophy, literature, and the spirit of the age, had to some considerable extent replaced her. Has an answer to all this been begun? Such an answer as, if its accents do not falter, will drown the voice of her enemies, and make

her call to repentance, her hallelujah of triumph sound alternately like trumpet and diapason, till the world is converted to Christ. The deadliest argument of modern infidelity was the practical one drawn from the social condition of Christendom. We were reminded of our godless and miserable crowds festering forgotten in the large cities which Christianity had long called her own; of the vile sensuality which in fair rural districts reveled to the sound of church bells, of the crimes of the low, the frauds of the middle and the excesses of the higher classes. Would a religion sent from heaven have left them, after all these years, in such a condition? This was an argument to which there was but one answer. Let Christianity save the people from their sins. Do we already hear the first accents of the reply to the question why Christendom was not regenerated? How many have exclaimed within the past year, while viewing the great work of God in Ireland, 'I never saw before how the world could be converted!' " Thus writes an English Christian in contemplation of the great revival in Ireland. To answer the objection of the inefficacy of Christianity, we must have powerful revivals of religion.

Besides, such revivals of religion confound infidelity, because they can not account for them without admitting the divine origin of Christianity. The people of God have been turning from their backslidings, and are filled with new life. Sinners in great numbers request the people of God to pray for them. In answer to prayer many are converted. The most profane, the



scoffer and the infidel, as well as those who believe in and respect religion, the aged and the young, become converts to righteousness, and together tell what the Lord hath done for their souls. Here is a miracle which no magicians can work. The change wrought is wonderful and beneficent in its results. This answers all grades of infidels. "The supernaturalness of religion, the miracle, the power, the demonstration of the Spirit, is what such men can not understand, and they gaze and wonder."

Then let the members of the church be filled with the Spirit, let them call conventions for prayer, let them stir up themselves and exhort one another to call upon God, let them go forth in labors to win their fellow-men to Christ, let them in all suitable ways prepare the way of the Lord, bring all the tithes into the storehouse until the windows of heaven are opened, and a glorious reformation wrought in the community around them, then will infidelity be answered and its power overthrown.

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"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" Luke, 11 : 13.

There is no gift which God can bestow, so great, so full of blessings, as the gift of the Holy Spirit. Without this, all else that God has done for us in creation, providence and redemption, would be in vain. Who would ever embrace the Saviour, who would ever be fitted for heaven, without the gift of the Holy Spirit? The gift of the Holy Spirit brings with it all spiritual blessings.

It unites the soul to Christ. It makes those who receive it children of God. It causes all the events of divine providence to be ministers of good to them. It makes death and eternity theirs. It is in them a well of water springing up unto everlasting life.

It is a fact almost universal, that earthly parents delight to bestow good things upon their children. For the purpose of so doing, most parents will deny themselves. Few are the parents who would not relieve their children's wants, when possessed of abundant means. Of all who apply to fellow-creatures for help, none do it under circumstances so favorable as children who apply to parents. Yet your heavenly Father is more ready to give the Holy Spirit unto them that ask him. Language could express no more readiness on God's part to bestow the Spirit. Oh, bid your unbelief be gone when you desire the Holy Spirit, and apply to God for the blessing.

Mark the extent of the promise. It is limited by nothing but the desire and application for the blessing. It is to them that ask him, that God is more ready to give the Holy Spirit than earthly parents are to give good gifts to their children. Are you living without faith and hope, alienated from God? You have never called upon God for the Holy Spirit. "Salvation is free to the willing." "Whosoever *will*, let him take of the water of life freely."

Child of God, do you know what it is to appropriate this glorious promise? Do you apply to God for the Holy Spirit with more than that confidence with which

a child goes to a kind earthly parent? Is your experience such that you can testify to the freeness with which God bestows the Holy Spirit upon them that ask him?

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#### SLAVERY, ANTAGONISTIC TO THE GOSPEL.

Said Patrick Henry, "We owe it to the purity of our religion to show its contrariety to slavery."

THE New Testament condemns those principles and feelings of the human heart in which slavery originates. It requires the direct opposite principles and feelings. The principle upon which the man acts who subjects his fellow men to bondage is entirely selfish. It is the principle of gratifying the desire for gain, at the expense of the rights, happiness and lives of others. And slavery develops this principle in its worst form. It sacrifices all the rights and happiness of men in this world, and all their interests for vast eternity, for the present emolument of others. This the gospel condemns, and requires instead, pure benevolence. That love which the gospel enjoins would make us more ready to sacrifice our own rights and happiness to promote the good of others, than to sacrifice their rights and happiness to promote our own good. It requires rather to choose to be ourselves "the slave and wear the bonds, than foster them on him." The gospel enjoins upon us that benevolence which leads to the denial of self for the good of others. "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth." "Charity seeketh not her own." Now no man, actuated by such a principle as this, can hold his fellow-men

in bondage, for the purpose for which slaves are commonly held.

Slavery is inconsistent with the work and example of Christ, and with the work which he has given his followers to do.

Christ tasted death for every man. He gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. Now how inconsistent with that system which thus puts honor upon all men, which represents the soul of every man worth more than millions of worlds, is slavery, reducing men to bondage, treating them as chattels personal, and subjecting them to every indignity which the passions and selfishness of men may dictate!

Besides, the gospel enjoins upon its professors an imitation of the example of Jesus Christ. Let the same mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus. He hath left us an example that we should follow in his steps. We are to possess such love to men as induced him, though he was rich, for our sakes to become poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich. Would such love be consistent with the reduction of our fellow-men to slavery? Christ came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. He said to his disciples, "I am among you as he that serveth." In these respects all should follow Christ. We can have no conception of Jesus Christ as a slave-holder. Yet he is *the model Man*, the example after which we are to form our character, and which the church is to follow. But those who follow him will be among men as those that serve. They will minister unto others rather than seek

to be ministered unto. Certainly they will not oblige men to serve them in involuntary bondage.

The work which Christ has given his church to do, is inconsistent with their subjecting their fellow-men to slavery. He teaches his followers to look upon the world as a theatre of usefulness, a field of service. He would have all his people filled with such love to others as would lead them to seek the salvation of all men every-where. The followers of Jesus are to go to heathen nations, not to reduce their population to slavery, but to carry them the gospel. Only let the church be possessed of the spirit of Christ, only let that love which worketh no ill to his neighbor, pervade all her members, and the great work of spreading the gospel through the earth occupy her heart and her hands, and she will not only purify herself from slavery, but stand as an invincible bulwark against it and every sin which degrades man, or stands in the way of his intellectual, moral and religious elevation.

Blessed be God, the gospel in its purity is to prevail and triumph. Then will slavery have passed away, and all hearts be filled with love to God and men, and every tribe and tongue join together in celebrating the praises of redeeming love.

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#### THE DUTY OF THOSE WHO HAVE THE BIBLE.

“THERE was once a fisherman whose hut was situated on a high and rock-bound coast. Near by was a sunny cove, with a smooth sandy beach, where he was accus-

tomed to draw up his little boat, from which he went forth day by day to engage in his toilsome occupation on the waters of the stormy sea. One day he went out as usual to spend the day in fishing. He toiled on with encouraging success till toward the afternoon, when, looking up to the sky, he saw threatening signs of an approaching storm. Immediately he hauled up his lines, resolving if possible to reach his home before the gathering tempest should burst upon him. But he had a long distance to go, and the wind was ahead and the sea was rough, and the storm came on fast, and the day was almost gone. Yet with a brave and trusting heart he turned the bow of his boat in the right direction, and began to row towards home. Right manfully did he bend upon his oars, and his boat flew rapidly over the white-capped billows. But darker and darker grew the heavens above him, and soon all trace of daylight had disappeared. The outline of the coast had faded from his view, and he could no longer see any of those well-known landmarks by which he was accustomed to direct his course. He went as near the coast as he could without being dashed against its jagged rocks. And then he rowed on till he was exhausted, but no sign of his hut or of the little cove near by could he discover. The storm raged fiercer and the night grew darker. Hope died away within him, and death stared him in the face. He expected every moment that his frail boat would be swallowed up in the stormy waters. But just then a faint ray of light met his eye. It renewed his strength. He rowed on more heartily. Very soon he

found that it proceeded from his own little hut. It guided him to the cove he was accustomed to enter. He drew his little boat up safely on the sand; and, grateful for his own deliverance, before he went to bed that night he trimmed the lamp and filled it with oil, and set it in the window of his humble dwelling, that its friendly light might shine upon the stormy sea, and perhaps guide some other tempest-tossed voyager to a place of safety. And as long as he lived he continued this practice. It was very proper that he should do this. He made a right use of the lamp himself, and then he tried to extend the benefit of it to others. And this is just what we should do. We have God's wonderful lamp. It shows us how we may sail over life's stormy sea, so as to reach the haven of everlasting rest and safety at last. But there are multitudes of our fellow-creatures who are tossed on this tempestuous sea without a single ray of light to guide their way. Should we not send this wonderful lamp to them? It is all they need. It is abundantly able to guide to the only place where they can find safety."

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#### THE SABBATH.

THE Sabbath is a fundamental institution of Christianity. Let the Sabbath go down, and all morality and religion, and all the institutions peculiar to Christianity fall with it. It is the grand institution appointed by Infinite Wisdom for impressing the truths of the gospel upon the minds of men, and of spreading a know-

ledge of Christ and him crucified through the earth. Sweep away the Sabbath, and how can men be assembled together to listen to the gospel? What access can the church and the ministers of the gospel have to those who are busy here and there on God's holy day? Take away the Sabbath, and men would cease assembling together to listen to the truth; the last spark of piety would go out, and midnight darkness would reign over the earth until the Sabbath was restored.

If as a people we have hope, it must be connected with the proper influences of the Sabbath. How unchristian and unpatriotic those who would lay rude hands upon this ark of the hopes of man! It is deplorable that any should claim the name of philanthropists, and at the same time aim a death-blow at that upon which the religious and social wellbeing of men depends. There is no patriotism or philanthropy in endeavoring to destroy the Sabbath, a day which God has made a blessing, and which is the medium of ten thousand mercies to his creatures. It can not be conceived how a man can act more effectually against the best interests of the human race than by acting against the Sabbath.

It is a matter of joy that the importance of the proper observance of the Sabbath has within a few years past so extensively arrested the attention of Christians and patriots, and that so much has been done to promote reform in reference to the observance of the Sabbath. Let this work go on. The Sabbath is the Lord's, and he will smile upon all proper efforts to save it from desecration.



Let us inquire, then, what can Christians and Christian churches do to help forward this reform?

All can do something to save the Sabbath from desecration. All Christians and churches can set a proper example. If, wherever they are, they strictly observe the Sabbath themselves, they will do something effectually to promote its observance. A proper example is one of the most effectual means of promoting any cause. In fact nothing stands so much in the way of removing the desecration of the Sabbath as a want of unswerving integrity in its observance among those who compose the churches. Let all professed Christians strictly observe the Sabbath, and its general observance will be secured. But what an influence it must have for professed Christians to travel on the Sabbath and otherwise desecrate it. It teaches the world practical infidelity; that is, that it is not always for the best good of man to keep God's commandments. See to it, then, all ye who compose the churches, that your example is correct in reference to keeping God's holy day.

By example and precept parents can instill into the minds of their children proper sentiments in relation to the Sabbath. Would you who are parents see your sons and daughters virtuous and happy, teach them to keep God's Sabbaths and reverence his sanctuary. Would you secure their final salvation, you can not be too earnest in enjoining upon them the remembrance of the Sabbath day. Had proper instruction been given in families on this subject, proper authority been put forth, and proper influence exerted, we had not seen

such wide desecration of God's holy day. From several families living adjacent to each other, and where one at least of whose parents were pious, I have known boys abroad in the woods and fields, and sometimes committing crimes, while their parents were in the house of God.

The church, and others interested in this holy day, must endeavor to effect a proper public sentiment upon the importance of the sanctification of the Sabbath. Can not public sentiment be made right on this as well as on any other subject? Let the guilt and evils of Sabbath-breaking, and the advantages of Sabbath-keeping, be every-where held up to view. Let the testimony of all who love God and their fellow-men be poured in against the desecration of God's holy day. Let public sentiment become such that the Sabbath-breaker would every-where feel himself rebuked, and much will be effected.

Let Christians send up their prayers to the God of the Sabbath, that he would bring to repentance the violators of his holy day, and that this institution, so rich in blessings, and so connected with the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom, may be perpetuated to the latest generation.

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#### THE TRUE VALUE OF HUMAN LIFE.

"He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake, shall find it." Matt. 10: 39.

HERE are presented two courses of conduct and their results. The one is that of a person giving a certain

consideration for his life, and suffering sadly for the bargain he makes. The other is that of a person for a certain consideration parting with his life, and being a great gainer by the bargain. Thus we have presented the consideration of the value of human life. What is it? How is it to be estimated? In what does its value consist? Oh! how few ever ask themselves for what is life given? How can I gain the end of my existence? There are things of more importance than life, which should not be sacrificed for life, for which life may be given. Such are honor, duty, virtue, integrity to God and fealty to the Lord Jesus Christ. These are not to be sacrificed for life. Life may be for these. Suppose a man, by embracing the religion of Christ, by complying with what the Saviour has required of him for salvation, should incur death. Let him not avoid death by neglecting his duty, by losing his soul. So taught the great Teacher. When called upon to renounce their faith in Christ, or to be thrown to the wild beasts, or to die upon the block or at the stake, none can doubt that the martyrs acted wisely who refused to be recreant to their Saviour. For themselves they acted wisely. For the world they acted wisely. What would have been the condition of the world if it had not been for the martyrs, like Huss, Wickliffe, Rogers, Ridley, and those who have laid down their lives to maintain truth and liberty? Suppose some who have felt called of heaven to go to the benighted nations of heathenism to plant the standard of the cross, that millions lost might find their way to heaven. Suppose that some

such have fallen a prey to an inhospitable climate or to savage ferocity. Have they laid down their lives for too small a consideration? Who shall say that Mrs. Van Lennep, Harriet Newell, Mrs. Judson, and Lyman, and Munson, have not done their part upon the theatre of life? Who shall say that the multitude who fell in the struggle for American Independence, did not perform their part for the good of the world? We must estimate the value of life by the results which can flow from it, both to ourselves and to others. The importance of life increases with the importance of the end which may be accomplished by it. Though God has placed us here for the most important purposes, purposes worthy our exalted faculties and the appointment of our Creator, still we may so live as to render life of little value. The Epicurean says, "let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." The sensualist plans only for new gratification of jaded appetite, and the votaries of wealth and ambition, to gain some new accessions to their wealth or their power. When for these objects men live forgetful of any nobler end, surely there is but little value to their lives. They who lead such lives are trees, indeed; they draw from the soil, they eliminate the sap, they stretch out their branches, they are covered with foliage; but fruit they have none, unless it be like the poisoned apples of Sodom.

Life is valuable as a season of preparation for eternity. Here we may obtain a knowledge of ourselves and of our Creator. Here we may cultivate the mind and the heart, eradicate our evil propensities, and

strengthen our virtues. He who is not overcoming the world, laying aside his sins, and becoming more like Christ, is certainly not accomplishing life's great end. Christ has a cause on earth. Its results are that for which the world is kept in being, and the wheels of providence move on. To promote that cause is the most important end of life. "To live is Christ." What value must be attached to the lives of Mills, of Judson, of Swartz, of Wesley, Whitefield and Edwards, and others who have been instrumental of extending the gospel, and saving lost men. But we can not say that the mighty river which rolls with majesty into the sea has more importance than the thousand little rills which run down the mountain side and feed it. Nor can we say that the more public servants of Christ are valuable above the many private Christians who are faithful in their sphere, and who by their prayers and contributions sustain the church and all the great movements to evangelize the world.

Wouldst thou have a value to thy life? Walk close with God. Keep the flame of love burning on the altar of thy heart. Be steadfast, always reliable. Let zeal and prudence lead thee on. Let no opportunity to speak for Christ go unimproved. Of thy substance freely give, and never tire till thy Master appear.

"Toil on, and in thy toil rejoice;  
For toil comes rest; for exile, home;  
Soon shalt thou hear the Bridegroom's voice,  
The midnight peal, 'Behold I come.'"

Whatever men may try to persuade themselves, we

all have an account to render. And they who pervert their existence here, must reap the consequences in a state of everlasting sorrow and despair. Be wise now, O fellow-traveler to eternity. Henceforth let life's great purposes be your aim.

There is a glorious reward for life well spent. As the faithful Christian ascends Pisgah's top, he looks back with gratitude over the way in which God has led him, and forward with exultant hope to eternal rest.

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### REDEEMING THE TIME.

#### A NEW-YEAR'S PIECE.

NONE can be said to redeem the time unless they give proper attention to the attainment of the great object of life, a preparation for death and eternity. The starting point in the redemption of time is to be reconciled to God, and consecrated to his service. Without this, so far as any good to ourselves is concerned, time will be lost. Without this, nothing can be done as it should be. Much time is lost by being devoted to vain objects. They who would redeem their time, must not only devote it to the best objects, but they must properly arrange or divide their time, so that every duty may be attended to in its season. They must form habits of punctuality. They must be thorough, and do what their hands find to do in the best manner. They must be persevering in every laudable, practical undertaking, not begin a thousand things, and complete nothing.

Time should be redeemed, because it is a precious treasure intrusted to us by our Creator. Wasting time is sin. We have time enough, but only enough for the duties of life. Let every moment be improved.

Redeeming the time is essential to happiness. Employment and activity in themselves conduce to enjoyment. Industry not only accomplishes what gives pleasure, but improves the faculties of both the body and the mind. Idleness is unhappiness, and impairs both the body and the mind. And how can we find any delight in reviewing the past, only as we redeem the time?

Another reason why we should redeem the time, is that our eternal welfare depends upon it. However rapidly time flies, eternity is on its wing. Every moment in its effects will tell upon endless years. Time redeemed, is heaven won. Time wasted, is heaven lost and hell incurred. In eternity we shall reap what we sow in time. Shall we not be willing to be diligent and watchful for an hour, to secure interminable bliss?

Another reason why we should redeem the time, is that much of our past time has run to waste. Time lost can never be regained. In time unimproved, who can tell what mortals lose! Sum up all other losses of the past, and the loss of time would exceed them all.

“Much of my time has run to waste,  
And I perhaps am near my home.”

Are we not sensible that we have not improved our opportunities for the cultivation of the mind and the heart as we might have done? What have we done

for Jesus? What account can we render for our means and opportunities of doing good? Have we no desire to do more for Jesus? Does it not become us to improve to the utmost the time that remains for the accomplishment of life's great work?

Another reason why we should redeem the time, is that there is so much to be done. We have much to do for our own souls, to gain an assurance of heaven and a meetness for it. We have much to do for our friends, to induce them to embrace the great salvation, and to intercede for them at the throne of grace. Then think of the work of evangelizing our country. Think of hundreds of millions in heathen lands, to whom the news of salvation is yet to be told. So great is the work to be done, that were hundreds of years allotted us we should have no time to waste.

Another reason why we should redeem the time, is that it is short. What is your life? It is even a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. At the longest, our time is short. Soon our sands will be run. Soon our sun will set. There is but a step between us and death.

“Eternity is just at hand;  
And shall I waste my ebbing sand,  
And careless view departing day,  
And throw my inch of time away?”

Another reason why we should redeem the time, is that by so doing, much may be accomplished. Great attainments may be made in religious culture. Great good may be done to others through our labors and



prayers. Great treasures may be laid up in heaven. Not a few of those who have accomplished great things for themselves and their fellow-men, have done so by redeeming the time.

“O what is time?” I asked the dying youth,  
Whose soul had shunned the ways of heavenly truth.

“It is a precious treasure I have lost;  
No tongue could tell the pains my life has cost.”

“O what is time?” I asked a soul undone.

“Ah, time! Most precious gift beneath the sun,  
The living warn to improve its rapid flight,  
Or else time lost will end in everlasting night.”

“O what is time?” I asked the book divine.

“A space for mortals to repent. ’Tis thine,  
The present moment, as it onward flies.  
Awake, and seek the bliss beyond the skies.”

I asked the saint whose hopes of heaven were bright,  
Who viewed eternal things by Faith’s blest sight.

“It is a space by God’s forbearance given,  
To escape from hell, and strive to enter heaven;  
A space of toil to gain eternal rest;  
Improved, ’t will make the soul forever blest.”

O God, inspire our hearts with love divine,  
And let thy heavenly light upon us shine.  
And may we spend in holy, trembling, holy fear,  
The fleeting moments of the passing year.  
And should our sands be run before ’t is fled,  
And we be numbered with the nations of the dead,  
O let eternal joys before us rise,  
O let us enter mansions in the skies.

THE REWARD OF THOSE WHO CONVERT SINNERS FROM  
THE ERROR OF THEIR WAYS.

“They that be wise shall shine as the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.”

THERE are degrees of happiness and glory in heaven. Some are saved so as by fire. Some are elevated to heights of bliss. True, we are saved by grace, and all the glory of our salvation will belong to Christ. Yet our felicity in heaven is connected with our works on earth. By advancing the cause of Christ we are made to reflect his glory. Those who heard of the conversion of Saul glorified God in him. All holy beings will glorify God in the redeemed from among men. As enjoying a peculiar felicity themselves, and as being instrumental of reflecting the glory of God, they that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever. They will have an eminence in glory and bliss above the other inhabitants of heaven. No privilege did God ever commit to created intelligences equal to that of laboring for the salvation of lost men. The reward of Christians for turning sinners to righteousness is somewhat in proportion to the value of the soul. A soul saved, what misery has it escaped! What joy awaits it in the interminable future! What can give Christians more joy than the recollection of labors, sacrifices and prayers by which others were saved! “There is joy in heaven in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.” What joy, then, must the saint experience in spending an eternity

in company with those who have been brought to heaven through his instrumentality ! He will in a sense enjoy all the bliss that they enjoy, and all the glory that they reflect upon Christ. Next to that which the redeemed will feel toward the triune God, will be the gratitude which they will feel toward those who are instrumental of turning them to righteousness. O how different the gains of those who labor for the treasures of earth, from the gains of those who labor to turn many to righteousness ! There is no certainty of the continued enjoyment of earthly treasures. All such enjoyment must be brief. But they who turn many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars *for ever and ever*. Not only bright, but everlasting joys are in reserve for them. O how glorious the prospect that beams upon their vision when they finish their course. Can you appropriate this promise to yourself ? Are you devoting your all to the cause of Christ ? Are you so living, praying, laboring, as to turn sinners to righteousness ? Can you look forward to eternity and contemplate those who shall shine as the stars for ever and ever, and not desire to have a place among them ? Blessed be God, those who will may inherit this promise. Work, and God will bless your efforts. Then, in the last great day, you will not have to stand alone before God, but will be able to say "Here am I and the children whom the Lord hath given me."

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18/10/19













